University of Alberta

"This feminine invasion": Women and the Workplace in Canadian Magazines, 1900-1930

By

Philippa Mary Brush ©

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
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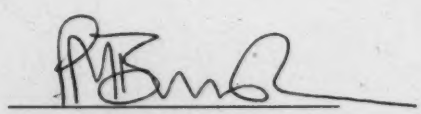

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Abstract

In the years between 1900 and 1930, increasing numbers of women in the professions and in new clerical occupations meant that the question of women in the public workplace became a topic for debate and, for some, a source of concern. In the Canadian magazines *Maclean's* and *Saturday Night*, and later *Chatelaine* and *The Business Woman*, debates around women in the workplace focused almost exclusively on women in the professions and in business and ignored women in other occupational categories and classes. The perception that women were invading what had been an almost exclusively male white-collar workplace in rapidly increasing numbers meant that the debates around women's paid employment tended to focus either on the assertion of women's "natural" and traditional role in the domestic sphere or on the justification of women's presence in the paid labour force.

In this dissertation, I trace some of these early twentieth-century debates about working women as they appeared in Canadian magazines. Using a feminist materialist strategy of explanatory critique, I explore the representations of women's experiences in the public workplace and discuss the ideological assumptions about gendered behaviours, responsibilities, and roles that informed them. I begin by outlining, through an article reprinted in both *Maclean's* and *Saturday Night*, the central assumptions that dominated the debates throughout this period. I go on to examine those assumptions in a series of chronologically-ordered chapters, each dealing with a particular aspect of the debates and

reflecting the shifts in perspective that took place during the First World War and in the period of "reconstruction" that followed. I end by considering the ways in which the rhetoric used to discuss women's work outside the home remains very similar today despite dramatic changes in the lived experiences of women in the paid labour force.

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My supervisor, Paul Hjartarson, has to come first. I've whined and complained and dragged my heels, and he hasn't appeared to mind at all. He's helped me better understand the complex ways the personal, political, and professional intersect, for which I am more than grateful. Jo-Ann Wallace and Susan Jackel have been supportive committee members and have shown generous interest in this project. Mary Kinnear and Karen Hughes kindly agreed to sit on my examining committee, and I appreciate their comments and encouragement.

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Introduction

The Professional Woman and the Woman in Business

A 1908 article in *The Busy Man's Magazine* opens with the assertion that "Somebody is eternally writing about the Business Woman, either to announce that she has proved a failure and is disappearing, or that her ability is transcendent and she threatens to displace Man" (Collins 42). Certainly, the number of articles published in *Maclean's*[1] and *Saturday Night* between 1900 and 1930 support that claim, as do the ways in which later women's magazines such as *Chatelaine*[2] and *The Business Woman* took up the debate. Articles both opposing and defending women's involvement in paid labour, offering practical advice, and profiling already-successful Canadian working women were staples of the women's sections of these and other Canadian publications. As the century progressed, the figure of the white-collar woman – variously referred to as the "woman in business" and the "woman professional" – remained central to larger debates around questions of women's roles, the family, pay and working conditions. The scope of the debate shifts as larger societal and economic changes take place, but many key questions remain central throughout the period. In the mainstream, predominantly middle-class print media, the focus for such questions was those women who were able to choose white-collar and professional occupations. While deliberately claiming to speak for all Canadians, publications such as *Maclean's* and *Saturday Night* were firmly middle-class in their editorial policies and their readerships, and consequently their portrayal of the working woman excluded, for the most part, working-class women in

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[1] *Maclean's* was originally published under the title *The Business Magazine* (Oct. & Nov. 1905), then *The Busy Man's Magazine* (Dec. 1905 through Feb. 1911), and finally changed to *Maclean's* in March, 1911.
[2] *Chatelaine* was originally published under the title *The Chatelaine* (March 1928 through 1930).

manual, industrial, or domestic employment. Women in working-class occupations rarely received any sustained attention and appeared only sporadically, generally as domestic servants or as the objects of middle-class concern, moral anxiety, or philanthropy – often as part of what was characterized as the "problem" of domestic labour[3]. Publications such as these had vested interests in maintaining the normalization of middle-class values and experiences, and their discussion of working women was no exception to this.

In this dissertation, I focus on the debates about working women presented in *Maclean's* and *Saturday Night*, and in early issues of *Chatelaine* and *The Business Woman*, and specifically about the "woman in business" and the "woman professional." The magazines that form the focus of this dissertation frequently refer to women in professional and white-collar occupations as though they were the only women in the paid labour force – conveniently ignoring the vast numbers of women working in other kinds of jobs in an attempt by to normalize a distinctively classed experience. Without seeking to duplicate this erasure of working-class women's experiences, I focus on the experiences of white-collar women in the paid labour force and the ways in which the texts that claimed to represent those experiences constructed a very particular version of Canadian womanhood. Understanding what went into the representation of women's experiences of white-collar work can shed light on the ways in which concerns around class and gender intersect and are constantly re-negotiated during the first three decades of the twentieth century in Canada.

Women's participation in the paid labour force increased overall in the years between 1900 and 1930, but it did not increase equally in all occupational categories. In fact, the percentages of women in service and blue-collar occupations both decreased

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[3] For a discussion of this question, see Helen Lenskyj, "A 'Servant Problem' or a 'Servant-Mistress Problem'? Domestic Service in Canada, 1890-1930," *Atlantis* 7.1 (Fall 1981): 3-11.

over the period[4]. Overall, there was an increase of 3.6% in the percentage of women in the total labour force between 1901 and 1931: in 1901 women constituted 13.4% of the total labour force and by 1931 that figure had risen to 17% (Prentice *et al* 423). Occupational shifts and the rapid development of opportunities for women in new clerical occupations meant, however, that changes within specific categories were much more dramatic. Between 1901 and 1931 the percentage of women in the clerical labour force rose from 22.1% to 45.1% (Prentice *et al* 423). This represented an increase of 23% and was nearly 6.4 times the overall increase in women's participation in the paid labour force. In the same period, the percentage of women in the professional labour force rose by almost double the overall increase, going from 42.5% to 49.5% (Prentice *et al* 423). Increases in educational and training opportunities open to women as well the entry of unprecedented numbers of women into new clerical jobs combined to begin the consolidation of women's presence in the white-collar workplace.

In the opening pages of *In Subordination: Professional Women 1870-1970*, Mary Kinnear points out that while census categories appeared to designate various occupations "professional" without any appearance of ambiguity, public opinion and debate suggested that the categories were more contested and complex: "beyond the commonsense acceptance of the description 'professional' in government statistics and in a widespread cultural understanding, there was a serious debate about the precise nature of the term" (8). Even within the census categories, definitions of which occupations should be considered professional were not static: nurses, for example, were included in the "domestic" category in the 1886 census, but by 1911 were listed under the subheading "medical" in the "professional" category (Kinnear 7). Although this probably reflects to some extent the shift in nursing practice from in-home care to institutionalized treatment,

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[4] The percentage of women in the service labour force decreased from 68.7% in 1901 to 62.1% in 1931, and in the blue-collar labour force from 12.6% in 1901 to 8.5% in 1931 (Prentice *et al* 423).

it is also indicative of shifts in the conception of nursing as a profession[5]. Also in 1886, the new occupation of "stenographer" was included in the category of "professional" (Kinnear 7) -- a classification which was to change with the massive and unprecedented influx of women into the new fields of work opened up by the development of stenography and the increased opportunities for employment for women in related clerical occupations. Defining who or what is a "professional" at any given moment requires a nuanced historical understanding of the contested nature of the term, and a sense of what was at stake in that definition.

The definition of a professional offered by Kinnear is a useful starting point. While acknowledging that the term itself is a "taxonomic quagmire" and that "part of the problem is semantic" (Kinnear 6, 7), she cites four main criteria that are employed in the description and definition of professional work:

> The first three [criteria] are postsecondary education and training in a subject requiring scientific or esoteric skill and knowledge; a certification test; and a degree of self-regulation by practitioners. The fourth criterion involves the provision of service to the public. (Kinnear 7)

The first three criteria are easily measured: educational qualifications, certification, and the way in which the work itself is conducted. Certainly, it was on these grounds that many of the battles over professional status for traditionally sex-typed occupations were fought. The fourth is perhaps less easily defined: "service to the public" can be defined in many ways. Still, this concern with community service could be invoked to legitimize women's involvement in certain professions[6].

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[5] For a detailed discussion of the development of nursing as a profession in Canada, see Kathryn M. McPherson's *Bedside Matters*.

[6] But, as Veronica Strong-Boag points out in her chapter on paid work in *The New Day Recalled: Lives of Girls and Women in English Canada, 1919-1939*, the invocation of women's philanthropic work was not always unequivocally supportive of women's paid labour: "women's claim to professional expertise [was not] secure. Cost-conscious administrators were ... likely to believe that family casework could be done quite well by "nice motherly volunteers" or even done away with altogether" (67).

Elizabeth Kemper Adams, in *Women Professional Workers*, offers a different set of criteria for defining who might be a professional: her criteria include training, recognition of professional status, "eligibility to membership in professional societies and associations carrying with it the obligation to maintain professional standards of skill and conduct," occupation of a position of responsibility in community, and a "permanent calling providing an adequate livelihood" (1-2). While Kinnear and Adams explicitly share only one criterion – that of professional training or education – there are similarities in the other criteria that suggest shared concerns. Adams' mention of eligibility to professional organizations might imply the certification that Kinnear includes; moreover, the occupation of a position of responsibility within the community and the provision of service to the public suggest a similar role for the professional in the larger realm of public life; and the responsibility to maintain professional standards implies a degree of self-regulation. Adams' insistence on remuneration suggests at least a tacit awareness of the pay inequities endured by women professionals and her inclusion of professional societies and organizations draws attention to the need for women to organize and act collectively to secure and maintain their positions within the professions. Adam's criteria are, generally, broader than those offered by Kinnear and, with that, allow for a more inclusive definition of what constitutes a professional occupation and who might be included in that category. While the "historic 'learned professions' of medicine, law, and divinity" (Adams 1) easily fit those criteria, other professional occupations more frequently undertaken by women cannot necessarily be defined in the same way and in relation to *all* of the five. Professions traditionally dominated by women – teaching and nursing being the most frequently cited examples – often satisfied only *some* of the necessary criteria. As Veronica Strong-Boag has pointed out, this posed material problems for women in such professions and even opened the way for questions about professional status:

> Teachers and nurses were … the archetypical female professionals. In their concentration in the lower strata of increasingly hierarchical education and health systems, their dependence on the public purse, and their difficulty in enforcing professional standards, they were extremely vulnerable to low wages, poor working conditions, and male supervision. (*New Day* 63)

Kinnear herself points to how "in a blithe assumption that the professional worker is male, sociologists have been slow to recognize that work performed by some women could meet professional criteria" (12), and these "blithe assumption[s]" often perpetuated the relegation of women's professional work to semi- or non-professional status without a more complex assessment of how gendered ideologies might work to construct women's professional experiences differently.

In the early years of the twentieth century, a *professional* was strictly gendered male and firmly linked to class. At the end of the nineteenth century, "the gendered nature of the professions was so completely taken for granted that there was no need even to justify the exclusion of women" (Kinnear 9). A professional was, quite simply, a *man*. But, he was also a man who was "ambitious and single-minded, committed to service and to his work" (Kinnear 17), and who would succeed through his adoption of late nineteenth-century middle-class ideals of "ambition, intelligence, and hard work" (Glazer and Slater 10). He was, by implication, a middle- or upper-middle-class man. An "educated, altruistic, genteel, and implicitly male professional" (Glazer and Slater 3) was the ideal, and this ideal was "increasingly predicated on character" and on a nineteenth-century "model of the gentleman" (Glazer and Slater 13). With the nostalgic invocation of this model came the equation of professional success with exemplary moral characteristics – an idea that "emphasiz[ed] not only selection by merit and performance but also service to the community, which presumably eschewed base concern for profit and reward" (Glazer and Slater 3). The model professional was not only a man but also a "gentleman," and his values and professional success could be measured accordingly. However, drawing on this model of the nineteenth-century gentleman to suggest certain

moral and ethical values does not take into account the question of remuneration -- the salary or fee earned through professional work. The contradiction that a "gentleman" had, conventionally, drawn his income from invested capital rather than earned it by his labour complicates the invocation of the nineteenth-century gentleman in the construction of the twentieth-century professional[7].

Just as important as the professional man's complete commitment to his clients or patients, was the support that a wife would provide – a wife whom he could "expect to manage the household and children and to provide him with emotional support" (Kinnear 17). This insistence on the importance of marriage to the professional man figured the domestic as the necessary complement of the professional, rather than as being something separate and distinct. The ideal professional, the man who was "efficient, objective, and devoted to service" (Glazer and Slater 13), was necessarily detached from the domestic, but needed the support of the domestic to enable his work. Being the wife of a professional man meant participating in his professional career through unpaid domestic labour, production of a family, and emotional support. Professional behaviour and success were defined "in terms that supported and even required [the] division of labor by sex" (Glazer and Slater 14), and as Kinnear points out, "literally unthinkable was ... the absence of women from the prerequisite support systems" (9) – the home, the family, the domestic. Traditional divisions of appropriate spheres of gendered activity, the sociosexual spheres of public and private in which labour and behaviour were divided along gendered lines, underpinned the position of the professional man because he relied on the support of the private to maintain the public, the domestic to maintain the professional.

Given these assumptions, the woman professional becomes almost an ideological contradiction in terms. While apparently based on gender-blind standards of merit and

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[7] I want to thank Mary Kinnear who pointed out this distinction for me.

individual effort, this concept of the professional served rhetorically to exclude women from consideration. The constant inclusion of "woman" as a modifier in the debates of the time underscores this apparent contradiction and at the same time reinforces the naturalization of *man* as the norm and *woman* as a deviation from that norm. The question of domestic support and assumptions about women's relation to, and occupation of, the domestic sphere further reinforce the ideological impossibility of women's professional work. Where, after all, could a "woman professional" find the level of support that a wife could provide to her male equivalent, and how could she devote herself wholeheartedly to her profession when her family – the domestic sphere – must, as a woman, receive her primary attention? An 1895 article by Margaret Sangster, published in *The Forum*, stresses how important this lack of automatic access to a supportive and well-run domestic sphere was in keeping women from professional life:

> The background of her life should be agreeable; of all women she requires a pleasant home, with the relief and freedom to be secured only under one's own roof. Whether her home be in a hotel, in a boarding house, or in some independent shelter where she keeps house, the woman editor must have a port to put into for repairs. *This is as essential to her as the business man's home is to him*. A bright, well-ordered house makes one over for to-morrow, however weary may have been to-day. (453; my emphasis)

For the professional woman, this "bright, well-ordered house" could not always be relied upon, and Sangster's mention of hotels and boarding houses underlines the need to substitute the domestic support offered by a wife with something else – something that must be paid for and which cannot offer a similar level of emotional support. This lack of domestic support combined with the gendered concept of the professional, as well as with repeated assertions of women's limited intellectual capacity, their inherent inability to cope with the rigours and strains of professional life, and their fragile moral sense, meant that women entering the professions had to overcome multiple obstacles.

With all these ideological barriers in place, it is perhaps not surprising that women succeeded most quickly and most easily in professions that could cite precedents in women's traditional domestic activities and responsibilities. . As Daphne Spain points out in her 1992 book *Gendered Spaces*, the "reproductive roles of women in the family create archetypes of gender relations outside the family" (23). In the public workplace, women's domestic and reproductive roles both enabled their participation and constrained them within versions of the kind of gendered positions they filled within the family home. In traditionally female-dominated professions, women could use assumptions about the kinds of work that were appropriate for them to move from those domestic precedents to the professional occupations that reflected them. Teaching and nursing are the two most striking examples of this. Teaching contained women within a workplace that brought them, for the most part, only into contact with children in a public version of the maternal role and so, as Spain points out, "because it so closely duplicated the domestic sphere, teaching was an acceptable occupation for women" (179). Nursing, too, reflected domestic precedents and in their struggles for recognition as professionals, nurses often had to contend with "widespread assumptions that any competent woman could assist the ill" (Strong-Boag, *New Day* 65). The domestic precedents that led so many women to enter these occupations, combined with the fact that both were occupations dominated – in numbers, at least – by women, led to them being stigmatized as women's work and even labeled by some as "semi-professions" (Kinnear 12). While the training required for both nurses and teachers fits the required criteria for a profession, concerns over a lack of self-regulation and autonomy, embodied by male domination in positions of authority -- doctors, principals, school inspectors, etc. – fueled

arguments that nursing and teaching did not meet the necessary criteria for full professional status.

Linking women's professional work to women's maternal role and to the domestic life that was thought to follow inevitably was a common strategy in the justification of women's professional work – even though the insistence on the maternal may seem somewhat contradictory. Ellen M. Knox, president of Havergal College, wrote in her 1919 book *The Girl of the New Day* of the ways in which the various professions open -- some newly open -- to young women could be seen as training for motherhood, "The Queen of them All" (216). In the chapter on nursing, she asserts that "Nursing touches the mother instinct, which is alive in every true woman, from the oldest and ugliest spinster...to the merriest-hearted school girl" (Knox 42). She ranks teaching next to motherhood as "the queen of all professions" (Knox 32), equating the teacher's responsibility for the children of others with the mother's responsibility for her own. She does not address explicitly the fact that women were encouraged -- and sometimes obliged -- to leave paid employment upon marriage, and that teachers, in particular, faced regulations that effectively prohibited the continuation of their employment once they were married (Kinnear 139-141). However, her insistence on paid work as a preparation for marriage and motherhood reinforces the assumption that women's paid work is and should be temporary. In her chapter on motherhood, Knox points out that the value of women professionals will decrease over time but the "mother reigns on supreme, her silvering hair a more compelling crown of glory" (217), and she asserts that every professional woman values motherhood over professional success. The assumption, by Knox and others, is that professional women "deep down in the bottom of their hearts,

Cinderella-like, are biding their time, merely waiting the day [sic] when they will each step forward and reign a queen supreme in a home of her own" (Knox 217). Professions – and particularly, though not exclusively, teaching and nursing – are reconfigured as training for marriage and motherhood, and the ideological threat of women's professional work is contained within a narrative of domestic education and development.

In some professions, women could also argue that their professional work was an extension of more traditionally feminine concerns. With this in mind, it is not surprising, for example, that many women doctors ended up treating predominantly women and children, or focusing on environmental health or social questions; that "the first generation of social workers defined a 'professional field for themselves linked closely to women's traditional nurturing identity'" (*New Day* 66); or that when women police officers were first appointed, their duties were restricted to providing a "moral influence" on women and children and support for women in the courtroom, rather than being full participants in the process of law enforcement ("Police Women"). As new opportunities and new occupations opened up to women, proponents of women's professional work argued that it was precisely because of traditional feminine characteristics that women would be suitable for various lines of work, just as opponents cited those same characteristics as reasons to contain women's sphere of activity within the domestic sphere or within highly circumscribed boundaries inside the public, professional sphere. As women were slowly and unevenly admitted to various professions, traditional notions of female behaviour shaped both the form and extent of their participation.

Women were relatively slow entering the legal profession which perhaps reflects the fact that there was no immediate equivalent or precedent in the domestic sphere on

which women could draw for the necessary ideological justification. As Kinnear points out, there were also other reasons that discouraged or prevented women, first, from training, and second, from qualifying, as lawyers. The "belief that women did not have either the mental or emotional capacity to perform legal work" (Kinnear 91) appears to have been enormously difficult to counteract, and the "structure of the training … presented a barrier that only a few women could or would surmount" (Kinnear 82). This combination of ideological and material obstacles prevented many women from either beginning or completing the training, or from continuing in the profession once they had obtained their degrees[8]. It was not until 1897, after six years of petitions and applications, and only after legislative change, that Clara Brett Martin was admitted to the Law Society of Upper Canada and became the first woman in the British Empire to practice law (Kinnear 78-79; Prentice *et al* 312-313). Women in other provinces faced similar difficulties, and it was not until 1941 that women were finally allowed to practice law in Quebec (Prentice *et al* 313). Even today, women in the legal profession face high levels of discrimination in the workplace. While this cannot all be attributed to the lack of a domestic precedent for legal practice, the particular problems suggest that the legal profession perhaps found it easier to maintain its gendered boundaries than other professions.

As women began to enter the professions, they quickly perceived the need to form their own professional organizations. Realizing that they would not be adequately served by existing organizations whose names denoted inclusivity but whose practices and membership lists were exclusive, professional women developed their own networks and

organizations. The Canadian Women's Press Club, founded in 1904, emerged from a demand that women journalists (another contested professional category) be given the same economic support -- free rail passes, in this instance -- as the male members of the Canadian Press Association[9]. In the early years of the twentieth century, women's professional organizations formed in response to anxieties about the maintenance of professional status and standards. The Ontario Federation of Women Teachers Associations and the Saskatoon Women Teachers Association were both formed in 1918 (Strong-Boag *New Day* 69). The Portia Club, formed in 1917, provided women lawyers with both a social network -- which was important in a profession that opened so slowly to women -- and a forum for community service (Kinnear 92). Glazer and Slater suggest that the ethic of individual effort, of a meritocratic system, may have discouraged collective effort among professional women. While this may be true in professional terms, and may be more relevant in the context of United States, women doctors and lawyers in Canada were active and visible in other broader women's organizations with broader or more explicitly political mandates. Dr. Emily Howard Stowe and her daughter Dr. Augusta Stowe Gullen's critical and high-profile involvement in the campaign for women's suffrage in Canada provides just one example. And women teachers and nurses organized early and effectively to lobby for acknowledgment of their professional status as well as for improvements in pay and conditions. Women's professional organizations could also serve as mutual aid societies – an important aspect of their role, given the lack

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[8] Kinnear points out that "between 1915 ... and 1971, fifty women were admitted to the Manitoba Bar" and that "considerably more intended to be lawyers but left before qualifying" (79).

[9] See Susan Jackel's article "First Days, Fighting Days" for a more detailed account of the founding of the CWPC. Kay Rex's book *No Daughter of Mine* provides an anecdotal history of the club's members and activities.

of state concern with women's unemployment (Strong-Boag, *New Day* 69). Just as male professionals required more professional organizations both to reinforce professional status and to formalize the process of self-regulation, so women professionals understood the value of wide-reaching professional networks.

Within the context of a gendered ideology, a "woman professional" was a contradiction in terms; yet, in the early years of the twentieth century women were demonstrating, through the realities of their lives and experiences, that it did not have to be a contradiction in practice. Women were entering the professions and becoming established there; women were struggling to defend teaching and nursing against charges that they were not professions and against the further entrenchment of pay inequities and exploitation; and women were developing new professions and becoming successful in other more established areas of professional work. For the purpose of this dissertation, a "woman professional" will be taken to include women in the professions, women teachers and nurses, and women in other contested professions. The variety and complexity of women's professional experiences went far beyond the simplistic gendered arguments that tried to deny or marginalize women's professional activities. While not all of the professions in which women were employed satisfy *all* of Kinnear's or Adam's criteria, cited earlier, they are sufficiently distinct from other occupations – clerical, manual, or domestic – to be considered separately and in relation to more traditional professions.

In her 1929 study Adams makes an important point about this distinction between professional work and other kinds of white-collar labour, and about the importance of the maintenance of that distinction. Outlining the kind of opposition faced by women in their

attempts to become professionals, she neatly summarizes the principal arguments used against women professionals – or against even the *idea* of women professionals:

> They have special problems of their own to meet and solve, such as the basic problems of combining a professional career with marriage and parenthood. In addition, they will have to forge ahead for some time to come against a professional psychology which forgets about them even more frequently than it objects to them, and is prone to include all women in certain sweeping generalizations:-- that the prospect of marriage makes them a shifting and undependable labour supply; that they are not willing to stand squarely on their record as workers, but evade responsibility for mistakes by falling back on the personal and social; that they lack group spirit and group standards; that they are more appropriately assistants and substitutes than directors and organizers -- a sort of innately secretarial sex. (Adams 18-19)

Distinguishing between women professionals and women as "assistants and substitutes," as clerical workers, secretaries, support staff, and shop clerks, Adams asserts that some employers consider women only suited to subordinate roles, to occupations that require supervision and carry little personal responsibility. Her apparently pejorative use of the phrase "an innately secretarial sex" suggests that already, by 1921, clerical and other similar occupations had been sex-typed, in the workplace and in the popular imagination. What is interesting about Adams' distinction is that it is often *not* maintained in debates around the questions of women's involvement in the paid labour force. In the debates around women in the white-collar workforce, women in business are dealt with in the same category as and generally treated as synonymous with women professionals. Chapter One focuses on an article by Mary O'Conner Newell titled "The Failure of the Professional Woman" which was reprinted in both *The Busy Man's Magazine* and *Saturday Night*. In the article, Newell asserts that "woman has failed to 'make good' ... in the professions and in business" (99), and addresses accusations that women are "dishonest and untrustworthy in business life" (104). She draws on other examples that

include women in clerical rather than professional occupations, yet she frequently uses professional as the adjective to describe them. The two categories are undoubtedly distinct, but they are not always treated as if that were the case. The aim in this dissertation is not to elide the two categories but to recognize how that elision frequently took place.

The "woman in business" presented another challenge to a gendered ideology that preferred middle-class women to occupy and maintain the domestic sphere with their unpaid and reproductive labour. Just as the professional woman was an "affront to the notion of gendered dependence" (Kinnear 16), the woman in business called into question assumptions about the nature and scope of women's paid labour. The "woman in business" is invoked in early twentieth-century debates around women's entry into paid labour as a self-explanatory category despite the fact that the range of occupations it appears to include is broad and varied. Articles on the "woman in business" include clerks, insurance brokers, entrepreneurs, typists, telegraphers, stenographers, a car saleswoman, department store buyers, and shop assistants. The example, cited earlier, of how "stenographer" was originally categorized as a profession but shifted as the occupation developed (Kinnear 7) gives some idea of the ways in which the woman in business was a contested and unstable definition, at the same time as it was assumed to be a meaningful category. Problems in defining the "women professional" as a category of analysis in the early twentieth century emerge from the contradiction perceived to be inherent in the phrase itself; problems in defining the "woman in business" reflect the fact that it appears to have meant something very different in the early twentieth century from what it means in the late twentieth century. Unlike the implicitly middle-class position

occupied by most professions and women professionals, the woman in business occupied a more complex and often contradictory class position, and that raises questions about the usefulness of categories of analysis such as "class" in discussions of the experiences of these women and the ways in which they were represented.

In *Women in the Administrative Revolution: The Feminization of Clerical Work*, Graham S. Lowe examines the early development of clerical work as an occupation that remains dominated by women. While his focus is on clerical and office jobs, many of the points he makes about women clerical workers can help here in understanding the complexities of the broader category, "the woman in business." Lowe points out the horizontal as well as the vertical segregations within the labour market that mean "white-collar" is itself a category that is internally divided along gendered lines. Being a white-collar man and being a white-collar woman, especially before 1930, mean two very different and generally very distinct things. With the "feminization of clerical work" and the institutionalization of both explicit and implicit "sex labeling" for various occupations, positions, and activities, white-collar work became horizontally segregated along gender lines. It is interesting to note that the stenographer is invoked as the exemplary woman in business during those years: stenography was considered an appropriate occupation for women, and one in which women had not so much displaced men as taken advantage of new technologies that opened new occupations to women. The concentration of women in lower paid, less responsible positions, with more repetitive and routine work, where they were therefore less valued, although certainly not less essential, framed the experience of white- collar work for women. Being a "woman

in business" prior to 1930 was more about being part of the business enterprise than about being a "businesswoman" in the way we tend to understand the term today.

Debates around women in business shared much with those around women in the professions. As the terms "business" and "professional" were elided when talking about women, so too were the representations of women's experiences in the white-collar workplace. The same assumptions emerged in debates around women entering the business world as they did in debates around women entering professional employment. Differences in the extent of training required, the social status accompanying various occupations, and the different levels of remuneration received were subsumed under a simplified narrative of middle-class women entering the paid labour force. No account is taken of the complexities of positions occupied by white-collar women in relation to class and economic status.

The question about how women's white-collar work can be viewed in terms of class is complex. The family backgrounds, the education, and the work experience of women professionals sets them more or less exclusively in the middle classes, although there are, as always, exceptions to that kind of broad statement. Working with the ideal of the professional as a "gentleman," the professions at least aspired to maintain middle-class values and standards. The equation of "middle-class" and "professional" is perhaps not, then, such a problematic one. But as Lowe points out, easy assumptions or generalizations about the class position of women in business – of, in his examples, women clerical workers – are more difficult and can be misleading. Traditional class structures that define women in relation to fathers and/or husbands, if they define women at all, do not take into account the complexities and idiosyncrasies of the socio-economic

position of women in business during the period Lowe characterizes as "the administrative revolution." Class cannot be easily equated with birth or family position, in this case, and it cannot, either, be reduced to financial considerations. Wages that were lower in relation to those received by male clerks were actually higher in relation to other occupations filled by women; in relation to other sectors of the female labour force, women in business were generally better paid and enjoyed more prestige than women in occupations traditionally accorded respect and professional status, however disputed that might be (Lowe 147, 149). The complexities of the class position of the woman in business, compounded by the novelty of her position, renders traditional class models inadequate and overly simplistic.

In this dissertation, I use the term "white-collar" to describe the working women whose lives and experiences are represented and discussed in *Maclean's* and *Saturday Night*, and later in *Chatelaine* and *The Business Woman*. While the majority of the working women represented in these magazines could probably be described as middle-class -- whether by virtue of family background, marriage, or education -- the term itself fails to take into account adequately the complex social, economic, and ideological positions occupied by these women. While "white-collar" is not necessarily a distinctively gendered term, I will be using it in this context to denote the specifically gendered experience of the public workplace. Using the term white-collar to describe these women encompasses the necessary level of education and the realities of the occupations in which these women were employed, whereas middle-class carries with it resonances of androcentric models of class and cannot account for the distinctive and

gendered experiences of women in business in the first three decades of the twentieth century in Canada.

I will discuss those experiences largely through the representations of them that appeared in *Maclean's*, *Saturday Night*, *Chatelaine*, and *The Business Woman*. Working with magazines as my primary texts presents very specific challenges. These are non-literary texts with multiple authors, and often have no apparent internal coherence. Studying these texts over an extended period of time also means that I have to take into account the ways in which they change and develop throughout the period. But using these texts also presents its own opportunities. Using *Maclean's* and *Saturday Night* offers a way to trace the shifts and nuances of the debates around women's white-collar labour over time and, through that, to follow the ways in which those debates respond to changes in the social and political climate of early twentieth-century Canada. I want to use this flexibility to explore some of the ways in which these modes of representation function in mutually constructive relationships with the objective historical realities against and within which they are produced and assigned meaning.

In a 1994 article entitled "Canada's Wage-Earning Wives and the Construction of the Middle Class, 1945-60," Strong-Boag argues that while we cannot know how the questions raised about white-collar women affected the lives of individuals, we can know to what extent the questions remained unresolved by examining the public debate: articles in magazines might not reflect directly the way people thought or behaved, but they do "confirm the still-contested nature of women's right to waged work" ("Wives" 20). We cannot rely on the representations of those women in the print media to provide an understanding of the objective realities of those women's lives – "the fact[s] of the

'working day'" – but we can begin to explain the ideological investments at stake in the reproduction of these *versions* of their experiences. As Gertrude Joch Robinson also points out, articles in magazines cannot be said to represent "real women" but they do represent powerful "messages about women" and about what kind of experiences or treatment women could expect (87). By encouraging "'preferred' descriptions" of women (Robinson 103), magazine articles continually reinforce a limited range of options and possibilities that support, in this case, a set of gendered expectations about participation in paid labour:

> How topics are selected and interpreted is much more directly affected by a belief … an ideology of woman as an economic and social "dependent". . . . The discourse also portrays women in sex-segregated positions which are extensions of women's nurturing role. If she is found in unusual male-dominated professions, she is presented as an exceptional case, a "first." Her choice of such a profession is usually justified by unique experiences or conditions which are not typical. It is consequently more difficult for the audience to identify with such a woman. We may conclude that these "preferred" descriptions prepare females to be satisfied with fewer work opportunities, unequal pay and segregated jobs, simply because they are women. (103)

Not only do textual representations construct a version of lived experience, they also help construct women's ideas about the kind of experiences they can expect in the paid labour force. The relationship is mutually sustaining: it does not ascribe simple equivalence to the material and the discursive but understands the complex and dialectical interactions between them, and understands the ways in which the popular media can both construct and claim to reflect lived experience.

My concern with the popular media's representation of women's experiences in the paid labour force emerges from broader concerns about the ways in which images of women are constructed within a dominant ideology that has vested interests in maintaining and sanctioning only a limited number of acceptable versions of women's

lives. An insistence on the explication and critique of such representations and the exploration of their relationship to women's lived experiences is necessarily a politicized process. Undertaking this kind of work historically – charting changes and continuities over time – helps establish narratives around women's lives and histories that can help us better understand the complexities of present-day relationships between representations and experiences.

Teresa Ebert, in the opening chapter of *Ludic Feminism and After: Postmodernism, Desire, and Labor in Late Capitalism*, sets up her "materialist explanatory critique" (18). This both "engages the material base of the social formation that … conditions cultural politics" and "regards culture to be always articulated by material forces" (Ebert 15): it insists upon a close and mutually-sustaining relationship between the material and the discursive, between objective reality and culture, while not eliding the two in the kind of discourse-as-matter equation she identifies in much of the ludic feminism she critiques. Ebert's emphasis is always on the objective reality that informs and constrains representation, and while she acknowledges that our ways of understanding objective reality are only made possible through discursive practice, she asserts firmly that "the fact that we understand reality through language does not mean that reality is made by language" (27). She insists that social relations and practices are objective historical realities and not representations by "self-legitimating discourses" (Ebert 38).

Understanding these discursive practices in the form of cultural representations calls for the kind of close and detailed analysis that finds precedents in the work, for example, of anthropologist Clifford Geertz. Geertz's insistence on "thick description" (3)

as the central tool of cultural analysis in the interpretive search for meaning can help establish a critical practice in which the specific and the general remain in close relation to each other, and in which the "aim is to draw large conclusions from small, but very densely textured facts; to support broad assertions about the role of culture in the construction of collective life by engaging them exactly with complex specifics" (28). These "complex specifics" can be equated with Ebert's discursive practices and, in this case, identified as the textual constructions of women's business and professional experiences reproduced in the magazines of early twentieth-century Canada. This echoes, too, the call by literary critic Janet Wolff for the integrated critique of texts and institutions. Wolff argues that we "cannot properly understand texts apart from their institutional and social origins, and that, conversely, institutional analyses … are inadequate unless they are also able to address questions of textuality" ("Texts" 104). While Wolff's article focuses on literary production, Ebert moves beyond the study of literary texts to the multiple and wide-ranging signs and representations that constitute culture and which stand in direct relation to the material conditions that produce them and their historically-specific meanings.

Aletta Biersack, in her critique of Geertz's work, argues that thick description can often run the risk of *merely* describing, and quotes Roger Keesing's assertion that "Geertz 'is mainly silent on the ways cultural meanings sustain power and privilege…. Where feminists and Marxists find oppression, symbolists find meaning'" (81-2). Ebert's explanatory critique – as the name suggests – goes beyond the merely descriptive to construct a critique that engages with those questions of power and privilege, and starts from the assumption that "we have to have reliable knowledge of the social relations and

institutions we seek to change" (5). Rosemary Hennessy's notion of the symptomatic reading of texts can provide one strategy for the acquisition of the kind of reliable knowledge Ebert demands. Reading symptomatically focuses on the moments at which the attempts of the dominant ideology to appear natural and hegemonic break down, and uses those internal crises to point out the potential for radical social transformation:

> To read a text symptomatically is to make visible that which hegemonic ideology does not mention, those things which must not be spoken, discursive contestations which are naturalized in the interdiscourse but which still shape the text's dis-eased relation to itself. To read symptomatically is to reveal the historicity in the texts of culture and in doing so put on display the exploitative social arrangements that they so often manage. (Hennessy 94)

Reading symptomatically highlights those contradictions in order to understand the ways in which hegemonic discourse breaks down and cannot sustain itself, even as it constantly reinvents itself in the process of trying. Hennessy refers to the reading of cultural *texts* in this way but the process can be extended to help provide the knowledge of social institutions and dominant ideological positions that Ebert's critique requires.

For Ebert, critique is necessarily politicized and transformative: to merely describe is insufficient, and the desire for social change is the central force that should be driving cultural analysis. Ebert argues convincingly that feminist critique should not be considered an end in itself or as the product of a self-contained process, but that it should be a "means for producing the historical knowledges of social totality that are necessary for any coherent praxis for a radical transformation of patriarchal capitalism" (5). She argues that what she identifies as ludic feminism refuses to engage with the potential for radical, wide-ranging social transformation, and instead contents itself with description, interpretation, pluralism, and localized attempts to "mend" existing institutions. Materialist explanatory critique, on the other hand, has the potential to "[enable]

transformative knowledge: practice … is inscribed in theory" (Ebert 18). This is reminiscent of Biersack's criticisms of Geertz, and of her call for an integration of semiotic cultural analysis with Marxist or other politically informed approaches. The micro-level work of thick description combined with Ebert's highly politicized model of materialist explanatory critique enables a mode of cultural analysis that reads the signs of culture as explaining the objective historical realities against which they are produced, and vice versa in a mutually-sustaining and defining relationship. The emphasis on practice means that new knowledge becomes a means of advocating and implementing social change and, I would argue, changing the ways in which we understand history and its uses.

How do we construct a critical practice that can engage with the difficult and often unwieldy integration of two seemingly distinct and often contradictory processes: the micro-level thick description of signs and representations, and the macro-level account of global social relations and objective historical realities? As Ebert puts it, "the issue is how we *explain* the relation of the discursive to the nondiscursive, the relation of cultural practices to the 'real existing world' – whose objectivity is the fact of the 'working day,'" – a relation that is necessarily "highly mediated" (42). This process of explanation becomes, in practice, a complex and sometimes fraught negotiation between the demands of close textual analysis and the demands of understanding those global social relations that both enable and constrain the texts under discussion.

In October 1905, Colonel John Bayne Maclean bought the small magazine *Business* from the J. S. Robertson company (McMurdy 44), and published two issues under a variation of that title as *The Business Magazine*. The December issue was then

published under the new title *The Busy Man's Magazine* – ostensibly at the suggestion of a subscriber. It continued under that title, with a variety of subtitles[10], until the March 1911 issue when the name changed again, this time to *Maclean's Magazine* (Mollins 54). The magazine provided a digest of selected articles from other international magazines, a list of articles of interest in leading Canadian and international publications, and a limited number of original articles by members of the editorial staff (Sutherland 140). The magazine's layout, in its early years, reinforced the desired impression of *Maclean's* as a weighty periodical. Long, full-page articles were reprinted in their entirety and were only occasionally punctuated by line drawings; the advertising was contained within a separate section, rather than integrated with the magazine's content. This changed as the magazine became more established, and soon after the final name change, articles began to be printed in columns, illustrations appeared more frequently, and the advertising was spread throughout each issue.

From the beginning, the editors stated explicitly their aims for *Maclean's*: they hoped to produce a useful and informative publication aimed at Canada's middle classes. The editorial in the December 1905 issue states that "the general aim of this magazine … [is] to be an entertaining and instructive companion for the busy man or woman of affairs" ("Inside" Dec. 1905, 3). Later editorials stress the breadth and inclusivity of the readership at which the magazine is aimed, and even the change of name – from *The Business Magazine* to *The Busy Man's Magazine* – is characterized as an attempt to

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[10] Examples include "Reproducing for Busy Men and Women the best Articles from the Current Magazines of the World" (Dec. 1905); "The Cream of the World's Magazines Reproduced for Busy People" (Jun. 1906); "The Review of Reviews for Busy People" (Aug. 1906); and "Containing the choicest and most entertaining articles and short stories appearing in the current numbers of the leading magazines of the world, carefully selected and conveniently reproduced; also lists of all the remaining articles of interest in the periodicals of the month" (Nov. 1906).

prevent the magazine from being regarded as too "technical" ("Inside" Dec. 1905, 3). The December 1905 editorial delineates more specifically the scope of the magazine's readership:

> Bank presidents, railway magnates, professional men, the heads of big businesses, and commercial men have all been entered on our subscription list and have spoken in most kindly terms of our publication. In addition we have secured a strong hold on the ranks of the country retailers, the smaller business men of the land, and the young men. *The Busy Man's Magazine* is cosmopolitan in its interests. It suits old and young, rich and poor, employer and employe [sic], teacher and scholar. ("Inside" Dec. 1905, 3)

This range of readership embodies the sense that the editors were trying to convey of *Maclean's* as the voice of the Canadian public. Yet despite the inclusion of "rich *and poor*" among those for whom *Maclean's* would be considered suitable, the subscribers are more or less exclusively from the middle or upper-middle classes. Other indicators of the implicit class bias of the magazine reinforce this class bias. Fraser Sutherland points out in his book *The Monthly Epic*, "although it claimed to embrace all ages and classes, *Busy Man's* cover suggested more propertied interests: there were pillars top, left and right, framing some worthy's portrait" (140).

The list of readers and subscribers cited by the editors of *Maclean's* – despite its claims of inclusivity – is also explicitly male. Even the titles and subtitles of the magazine helped reinforce this gendered readership. It was not until May 1906 that the editors added "the business woman" to the list of those who would be sure to find the articles interesting ("Inside" May 1906, 3). Before that, the wives and families of "busy men" are mentioned only occasionally as possible readers, and the "business woman," the "busy woman," or the more neutral "busy people" appear only sporadically in subtitles

and editorials. The only other direct mention of a female readership comes in an anonymous testimonial letter published in the first issue of 1906:

> You may intend your publication for busy men, but my experience shows it is intensely interesting to lazy women. I missed my copy and could not find it anywhere, until I happened to pass through the laundry, where I found the laundress reading the article on D. D. Mann with the most intense interest. I got it back and it disappeared a second time, and again I found it in the kitchen, showing clearly that it is of as much interest to women as to men which I am sure will surprise you as much as it did me. ("Inside" Feb. 1906, 5)

The anonymous reader's "surprise" is, perhaps, reinforced by the fact that the "laundress" and, presumably, the cook are not in the same social class as a business woman or the wife of a "busy man" -- the only other women who are cited as possible readers of the magazine. Other editorials encourage the purchase of subscriptions as Christmas gifts for employees with reduced subscription rates specifically for the purpose ("Inside" Dec. 1905, 5). However, this anonymous reader's *women* employees are characterized as "lazy" when they show an interest – "the most intense interest" – in the magazine, and their employer is quick to take back his copy rather than to encourage their interest. Still, the assertion that the magazine can be of interest to women as well as men could perhaps suggest an attempt to broaden the readership and boost circulation.

Despite this determinedly male focus, *Maclean's* published a significant number of articles during the early years of the twentieth century that deal explicitly with the question of women in the workforce. These articles offer a variety of perspectives: some applaud women's increasing involvement in paid labour, and others decry that involvement as unnatural and inevitably temporary. Its discussion of women in business and professional life may have been contradictory at times as a result of the magazine's digest format. Articles put forward arguments about women's suitability for various

kinds of work, women's successes and failures, women's encroachment on masculine areas of influence or expertise, and women's acknowledgment or rejection of their prescribed domestic roles. The discussion relied, to a large extent, on a familiar rhetoric of the separation of the spheres – the ideological equation of women with the private, the personal, and the domestic, and of men with the public, the political, and the professional, and drew on assumptions about women's labour, roles, and responsibilities that would have been familiar to its readers. The discussion in *Maclean's*, with all its contradictions, has that ideological separation at its centre. It reproduces the separation in the often virulent opposition it presents to women entering the paid labour force. But it also counteracts the separation through the fact that it deals with women's concerns and experiences within the bounds of a publication aimed so explicitly at a male readership.

Saturday Night was founded by Edmund Earnest Sheppard (Sutherland 81), and the first issue appeared on December 3rd, 1887.[11] Still published today, *Saturday Night* is now the "longest running continuous publication in Canada" (Heggie v). Described, rather disparagingly, in 1948 as "a Toronto weekly digest, surveying news trends from the sidelines" (Nichols 40), *Saturday Night* was, during the early years of the twentieth century, a publication that straddled an already blurred line between weekly newspapers and magazines. Its mix of fiction, society news, and editorials, along with the dominant advertising, made it a very different publication from *Maclean's*. Its Toronto base – its role as a "city paper" before it grew into a "national magazine" (Sutherland 92) – also influenced its content, focus, and tone. Like *Maclean's*, *Saturday Night* reprinted articles

[11] Sheppard continued as owner and editor until 1906 when he sold it to Harold Gagnier who, in 1909, hired Frederick Paul as editor – a position he filled until 1929, making considerable changes to both content and format (Sutherland 92; Heggie vi).

and news from international sources, although it tended to provide excerpts rather than reprint the complete stories. Its column format made it visually closer to a newspaper, but the content was more varied.

In her preface to *An Index to Saturday Night: The First Fifty Years, 1887-1937*, Grace F. Heggie describes *Saturday Night*'s readership as representing "a defined and influential segment of the Canadian population – upper middle-class English-speaking Torontonians" (v). The "Salutatory" editorial in the first issue sets out the magazine's aims, and what will constitute the magazine's content. The editorial claims that the new publication will be a "really good pictorial paper" that "cannot but succeed if its scope is wide enough to meet the tastes of the general public" ("Salutatory"). As with the editorials in *Maclean's*, it lays considerable emphasis on the inclusivity and breadth of the readership at which the publication is aimed. Stressing *Saturday Night*'s broad appeal, the editorial also asserts that "it is not the intention of THE SATURDAY NIGHT to speak evil of anyone, and the publishers and editors desire that nothing shall appear in these columns which will alienate a friend or cause either anger or pain" ("Salutatory"). The editors want *Saturday Night* to be a "paper of to-day, dealing with current topics," and hope that the "correspondents' column will be … a reflex of public opinion on the questions of the hour" ("Salutatory"). Setting itself up as a paper without competition in Canada, *Saturday Night* presents itself as a certain success because of its understanding of the needs and wishes of the reading public:

> we feel confident that a really good pictorial paper cannot but succeed if its scope is wide enough to meet the tastes of the general public. In order to enlarge our constituency, *Saturday Night* will not only present illustrations as its leading feature, but will supply departments of social and family reading which cannot fail to amuse and instruct. ("Salutatory"; qtd. in Sutherland 81)

Although it shared with *Maclean's* the desire to "instruct," the desire to "amuse" sets it apart as a different sort of publication. *Saturday Night* was a "pictorial paper" with short items laid out in newspaper-style columns, along with a large proportion of illustrations and advertising.

The desired readership for *Saturday Night* was broader and less specifically defined than that of *Maclean's*. The opening editorial talks of appealing to the "general public" and of "enlarg[ing its] constituency," as well as of the inclusion of "departments of social and family reading" which already extends the readership beyond the "busy men" at whom *Maclean's* was so explicitly targeted. From its earliest issues, *Saturday Night* appears to have been more concerned with catering to a female readership – a function, perhaps, of its high advertising content[12]. The central illustration on the front page of the very first issue of *Saturday Night* is titled "Your Paper, Ma'am" and depicts a woman domestic servant taking a breakfast tray and a copy of *Saturday Night* to her woman employer. Sutherland points out that "although *Saturday Night* was by no means a woman's paper, it paid much more attention to what was still called 'the fairer sex' than most of its contemporaries" (83). Leaving aside for the moment questions of what might constitute a "woman's paper," it is interesting to note that *Saturday Night* included, from its outset, articles and features that were more typically associated with magazines or magazines' departments that were aimed primarily at women. It was not until the first appearance of the "Women's Section" in the November 27th, 1909, issue that the articles,

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[12] Sutherland points out that the degree of control women exercised over family spending decisions made them a lucrative target market for advertisers (153). Economists as far back as Adam Smith have pointed to the economic power wielded by women as consumers. This power blurs the distinction between public and private spheres of activity for women. While women are performing a private domestic role as housewives, they are within that performing a public economic role as consumers.

the columns, and the advertising were divided along gendered lines, replicating again the ideological separation of gendered spheres of appropriate interest and concern.

Fig. 1. "Saturday Night: Women's Section," header from *Saturday Night* 10 Mar. 1928: 29.

Saturday Night, like *Maclean's*, published a number of articles that dealt, directly and indirectly, with contemporary debates around women's increasing involvement in paid labour. Again, much of the debate drew on assumptions about appropriate roles for women, whether to challenge or to reaffirm them. The articles tended to be shorter and less detailed than those in *Maclean's*, and that is largely a function of the differences in format between the two publications. Often, articles on these questions in *Saturday Night* tended to contain coverage of specific events – for example, the merging of the Ontario women's medical college with the University of Toronto – or to address questions about specific occupations or circumstances, often in an international context. The more extended articles often profiled women in white-collar occupations or offered advice for women on vocational opportunities and training. Because of the practice of reprinting and excerpting articles, the debate in *Saturday Night* can be as contradictory as that in *Maclean's*, with views on all sides of the questions reflected in the various articles and

shorter pieces. The frequent inclusion of more explicit editorial comment in *Saturday Night* does, however, sometimes offer different perspectives to those expressed in the articles themselves and gives a more explicit sense of an editorial position.

Chatelaine was one of the three major publications founded or acquired by the J. B. Maclean Company in the latter half of the 1920s[13] which represented Maclean's first attempts at the publication of magazines aimed exclusively at a female readership. There were other women's magazines that pre-dated *Chatelaine* and they might have appeared to have cornered the market[14] – a fact that did not prevent the Maclean company's attempt to break into what was a potentially very lucrative market. The popularity and high circulation figures of other women's magazines demonstrated that there was a significant market for publications aimed at a female readership, and the increasing power of women as consumers meant that advertisers were willing to support those magazines. As Sutherland points out, "although women were limited in their earning capacity, they had a great deal of leeway over the spending of disposable income. This was, in fact, a mass audience with the power of the purse" (153). Just as *Saturday Night* could combine departments of "social and family reading" with extensive advertising, so women's magazines and the firms who advertised in them could exploit the fact that consumer decisions within families were frequently made by women.

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[13] The Maclean company bought *Canadian Homes and Gardens* in 1925, founded *Mayfair* in 1927, and started *Chatelaine* in 1928. *Chatelaine* was published as *The Chatelaine* until 1930 when it was changed to the name under which it is still published today (Sutherland 157, 158).

[12] *Home Journal* was founded in 1905 by James Acton and was originally published under the motto "Pro Domo et Patria." It doubled its subscription within two years, changed its name in 1910 to *Canadian Home Journal*, and by 1925 had a circulation of approximately 68,000 (Sutherland 156). A magazine titled *Everywoman's World* ran from 1914 until 1922, with its 1917 circulation high of 100,000 being the "largest then achieved by a Canadian magazine" (Sutherland 157).

The first issue of *Chatelaine* came just over a year before the women's section in *Maclean's* changed from its original title of "Women and their Work," and combined with the "Home and Garden" department to become "Women and the Home." With that change, its content became more resolutely domestic. The founding of "what was to become the most enduring and profitable of [the Maclean company's] female-oriented trio of magazines" (Sutherland 158)[15] was perhaps an attempt to capitalize on the market represented by the wives and daughters of subscribers to *Maclean's* – those women who had previously been reading "Women and their Work." Like *Maclean's*, *Chatelaine* was "resolutely middle-class" (Sutherland 158) at the same time as editorials proclaimed the magazine's inclusivity. In an early gesture towards the active role its readership might play in the development and focus of the magazine, the title was chosen in a national contest which attracted more than 75,000 entries and offered a $1,000 prize (Sutherland 158)[16]. *Chatelaine* was originally edited by Anne Elizabeth Wilson. By 1929, Wilson had been replaced by Byrne Hope Saunders who came to *Chatelaine* after a short period as editor of *The Business Woman* and remained until 1942, returning in 1946 for a further five years (Sutherland 159-160). The first issue's editorial, signed by Wilson, lays out the mandate and focus of the new magazine:

> If the light of The Chatelaine's lamp, when it shall have fallen your way, has brought more meaning into the everyday world about you, shown you an unexpected beauty, helped you to find better methods in any activity of your home or life, then she will have accomplished the purpose for which she came into being – to serve Canadian woman in her every interest and need. (Wilson 16)

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[15] The other two magazines in the trio were *Mayfair* and *Canadian Homes and Gardens* (Sutherland 158).

[16] Other names suggested included *Eve's Sphere* (Sutherland 158). The choice of that name would have further emphasized the division of interest and concern embodied in the Maclean company's decision to compartmentalize its female readership, first within a women's department and later within a separate publication.

Although Wilson does distinguish between a woman's "home" and her "life," the content of the early issues of *Chatelaine* rarely makes that distinction. Judging by the content, the Canadian woman's "every interest and need" was centered on her domestic and family responsibilities and roles.

In contrast, *The Business Woman* was a magazine that concerned itself primarily with women in the white-collar workforce. While *Chatelaine* was perhaps aimed at the wives and daughters of *Maclean's* subscribers, *The Business Woman* was aimed at their women colleagues and employees. Its focus was less on the domestic and more, as its title suggests, on the working lives of women. *The Business Woman* began publication in November 1926 when it replaced the newsletter *Club Life* as the publication of the Canadian Business and Professional Women's Club of Toronto.

The Business Woman was originally edited by a board of three Club members, but by the third issue Mary Etta Macpherson had been appointed editor, with the board now functioning as an advisory board. The editorial in the first issue sets out the magazine's aims:

> You have in your hands a unique thing – the first copy of the first magazine ever printed in Canada, as far as we are aware, that has for its main theme the various interests of the women who work at the many tasks that commonly pass as business.
>
> *The Business Woman* then is, first of all, our magazine – it will very largely be produced by women....
>
> Our interests are the various interests of all women plus a better understanding of the business struggle that goes to make up modern life. The common basis for most of us is that we are the employees of organizations, each rendering the world and our community some service....
>
> It will be the constant care of *The Business Woman* to present those general matters of wide moment that may interest us.... Editorial sections will appear that should be helpful and interesting to every business woman. They will discuss office methods, investments and financial matters, the theatre, the book shelf, health, personal appearance, sports, dress and travel. Lest we take

> ourselves too seriously, humor will be admitted, and stories that appeal to us, whether they be fact or fiction. ("Greetings")

The emphasis on women's working lives supports the editors' claim to uniqueness, and *The Business Woman*'s perspective on the debates around white-collar women's lives is, because of this, very different from that of *Chatelaine* or of *Maclean's* or *Saturday Night*. There is no mention of the domestic – of marriage or motherhood – in the list of topics that will make up the magazine's "editorial sections," and the emphasis on work-related questions and on financial matters reinforces the concern with women's experiences in the public and professional sphere.

These four magazines provide four very different perspectives from which to approach the questions raised in public debates around women's entry into the white-collar workforce. The differences between them allow for the consideration of a variety of views and opinions on the issues, as well as providing a sense of the continuities and common threads within the debates. Tracing the debates over time – first through *Maclean's* and *Saturday Night*, and later through *Chatelaine* and *The Business Woman* – gives a sense of the ways in which responses to the various questions raised by women's participation in white-collar labour were answered and how those questions changed in relation to the objective historical realities against which they were being asked. That three of the four magazines are still published now also invites the extension of the immediate scope of this dissertation into the consideration of how those questions – in different forms – are still being asked today.

In the chapters that follow, I examine a series of chronologically arranged moments that bring into focus some of the changes and the continuities in the discussions about women's participation in the white-collar workforce of the early twentieth century.

In the first four chapters, I take *Maclean's* and *Saturday Night* as my primary texts to talk about those discussions; and in the fifth chapter I turn to *Chatelaine* and *The Business Woman* to consider how two very different magazines aimed specifically at women later took up the same questions. Chapter One focuses on an article from New York's *Appleton's Magazine* that was reprinted in both *The Busy Man's Magazine* and *Saturday Night*, albeit in very different forms. The article provides a useful starting point for a discussion of the issues that came to characterize the debates and the kinds of rhetoric in which they were framed. Chapter Two addresses the ways in which the ideological separation of the spheres along gendered lines was invoked both to defend the white-collar workplace against an "invasion" of women and to support the "pioneer" efforts of women in the workforce. I go on to discuss the ways in which the invocation of the construct of the separate spheres required, in this context, re-evaluations of the characterization of both public and domestic spaces. Chapter Three addresses the ways in which the First World War influenced expectations around women's paid labour, and argues that the frequent biographical sketches of working women helped to construct a narrative of post-war Canadian womanhood that insisted on women's exemplary occupation of both public and domestic spheres. Chapter Four considers the increasing ideological pressure on women during the mid-1920s to return to the domestic and to give up the gains they had made in the paid labour-force during and immediately after the First World War. Chapter Five examines how the Maclean-Hunter company's attempt to compartmentalize its readers along gendered lines with the introduction of *Chatelaine* reinforces a domestic model of successful womanhood; the chapter goes on to contrast *Chatelaine*'s domestic focus with the more resistant and career-oriented focus of *The*

Business Woman. The conclusion suggests how exploring the history of these debates can help us better understand the ways in which women's paid labour remains an ideologically contested question. I refer to an article and series of letters in *Maclean's* from March and April of 1999 to highlight connections between earlier debates and those that continue today.

Chapter One

"The Failure of the Professional Woman"

The July 1908 edition of New York's *Appleton's Magazine* included an article by Mary O'Conner Newell titled "The Failure of the Professional Woman." Within a few months of the original publication, the article or extracts from it had been reprinted in two Canadian magazines: *The Busy Man's Magazine* and *Saturday Night*. Newell's article is a detailed account of the reasons why the white-collar woman[1] has failed to "'make good' her pretensions to consideration as an independent leader and thinker in the professions and in business" (99). She sets out to explain why business and professional women, after showing such promise, have failed to live up to the expectations they had raised, and why women should now acknowledge that the obstacles against which they have been fighting are perhaps too great to be easily and effectively overcome. That Newell's article was reproduced in two separate Canadian publications suggests that it managed to articulate significant aspects of the debate around women's increasing involvement in the white-collar workforce that resonated with Canadian editors and, by extension, a Canadian readership, as well as with the American readership at which it was originally aimed.

The Busy Man's Magazine and *Saturday Night* treated the article very differently. *The Busy Man's Magazine* reproduced the article in its entirety with a short three-point summary describing the article's main argument for the reader. Beyond that summary, it provided no other context or introduction except the author's name and the name of the

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[1] Newell uses the terms "professional woman" and "woman in business" interchangeably, reflecting the conflation of the two that was common in early twentieth-century discussions of women's white-collar work. While her title emphasizes the adjective "professional," her examples draw primarily on women in business-related occupations although she does, at one point, cite the experience of a woman teacher as an example. Her conflation of the two categories is certainly not unusual and highlights the ways in which specific experiences in women's business and professional lives were subsumed under a single narrative of middle-class women's entrance into the paid labour force.

publication in which the article originally appeared. This was common practice in *The Busy Man's Magazine*, as almost all articles were prefaced by a short, point-form summary to help the "busy men" who are the desired readers decide how best to spend their reading time. The only other difference between the *Busy Man's Magazine*'s reprint and the original is the inclusion of two full-page illustrations. In contrast, *Saturday Night* reprinted only short extracts from the original article along with more substantial editorial commentary, changed the title, and located the argument in the context of Newell's own career. What was originally a lengthy article is reduced to a series of short, quoted passages, and fills only one column of the magazine's page. The *Saturday Night* reprint is more a commentary on the original with a few excerpts than it is a complete reproduction.

Appleton's Magazine, in which Newell's article first appeared, was a short-lived periodical and, like *Maclean's*, it began as a version of another publication. *Appleton's Magazine* appeared in various forms and under various titles between January 1903 and June 1909 (Wolfe 416). Originally published semi-annually as the *Booklovers' Magazine* by the Publishing Company of Philadelphia, the magazine was purchased by D. Appleton and Co. in July 1904 (Wolfe 305). A year later, in July 1905, the name was changed to *Appleton's Booklovers' Magazine*, and in July 1906, the name was changed again simply to *Appleton's Magazine* (Wolfe 308). The original publication was a "lavishly illustrated periodical, rich in color and black-and-white sketches and half-tone photographs. It was a chatty and scrappy affair with no clearly discernible editorial policy, and untidy and cheap in format and layout, and not by any means always addressed to booklovers," although, as Wolfe points out, its list of contributors was "fairly respectable" (Wolfe 305). Following several changes of editor, the publishers appealed to their readers to help decide the magazine's future:

> Should it be a ten-cent magazine? Should it be a twenty-five cent magazine? Should it be a magazine of *belle lettres*, or should it go into the questions of the hour? Should it deal with timely topics, or never touch on timeliness? Should it have fiction, and if so, what kind -- short, long, or both? .... Let us acknowledge at once, then, that the ideal magazine is one in which the readers help the publishers to shape its policy. We want your assistance, therefore, in helping us to decide what *Appleton's Booklovers Magazine* shall be, what it shall stand for, and what shall be put into it, month by month. (qtd. in Wolfe 306)

The magazine's content included a large quantity of fiction, with serialized novels and short stories by writers who included Henry James, Joseph Conrad, and Maxim Gorki (Wolfe 306). Once the final name change was put in place in July 1905, changes in the magazine meant more space devoted to advertising and the magazine even ran a competition that asked readers to choose the most successful advertisement (Wolf 307-308). The final issue appeared in June 1909, when the magazine abruptly ceased publication. Wolfe, quoting Samuel C. Chew, points out that the "magazine fell between two stools, being neither sufficiently intellectual to appeal to a limited, loyal clientele, nor sufficiently popular for the great mass of readers" (Wolfe 308).

According to the *Woman's Who's Who of America, 1914-1915*[2], Mary O'Conner Newell was a professional journalist and writer, producing magazine and newspaper articles in New York City between 1906 and 1910. After her graduation from the University of Michigan with a BA in 1899, she worked as a book reviewer for the Chicago *Record-Herald* and in 1910 became a special writer for the same paper. She was married in 1905 and her son, Robert, was born in 1906. Her article "The Failure of the Professional Woman" appears in volume XII of *Appleton's Magazine*, in 1908.[3]

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[2]Thanks to Ellen M. Shea, Reference Assistant at the Arthur and Elizabeth Schlesinger Library on the History of Women in America at Radcliffe College, Cambridge, MA, for providing this information.

[3] Other articles in that volume ranged over a wide variety of topics including Holman Day on "Does Prohibition Pay? Maine, Fifty-seven Years of Prohibition" and The Reverend Charles F. Aked on "The

Newell's article sets out the ways in which white-collar women cannot hope to succeed and have failed to live up to their early promise. Newell chooses to frame her article with quotations from Margaret Fuller, the nineteenth-century American intellectual who is perhaps best known for her monograph *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* and for her editorship of *The Dial*.[4] Fuller was certainly a name that Newell's readers would recognize: in 1902, she was ranked sixth in a poll to choose twenty women as candidates for a Hall of Fame for Great Americans (von Mehren 1). Newell opens the article with what she presents as an extended quotation from Fuller:

> "There was no warmth for me on all those altars.... I was always to return to myself, be my own priest, parent, child, husband, and wife.... The life! the life! Oh, my God! shall the life never be sweet?" Before woman was recognized a Cause, and long before business barriers were let down for her, she who was given a more immediate intellectual recognition by brilliant men than has ever been accorded to any other American woman, Margaret Fuller, wrote and felt thus. The words sum up the whole conflict of the woman in professional life, which is the almost always enforced choice between public life and the home, between business and true wifehood and motherhood. (98; ellipses in original)

This is, in fact, a conflation of three separate quotations from Fuller's writing. The original sources span several years and come from very different contexts, but Newell brings them together to suit her own rhetorical purpose. By doing so, she changes the import of Fuller's words and represents Fuller and her life in a way that was very different from more usual representations. I have been unable to locate the first phrase – "There was no warmth for me on all those altars" – in Newell's patchwork of quotations.

Right and Wrong Use of Sunday," as well as poetry by Marjorie Pickthall and articles by John T. McCutcheon.

[4] Fuller was born in Camridgeport, Massachusetts, in 1810. After working briefly as a teacher, in 1839 she took up the editorship of *The Dial* and began to offer classes – known as "Conversations" – for women. She published monographs and articles in various periodicals and was best-known for her work *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*, published in 1845. In 1847 she moved to Italy where she became actively involved in political life. A year later, her son Angelo Ossoli was born (Kelly xxxv-xxxvi). As Joan von Mehren

The second part comes from an 1839 letter from Fuller to George Davis, an "old would-be beau," soon after they had rekindled their friendship (Capper 289).[5] In the letter, Fuller laments her realization that she "should never find a being who could keep the key of [her] character;... on whom [she] could always lean, from whom [she] could always learn" (qtd. in Capper 289). However, she goes on to add that she is also proud of her independence: "I was proud that I was able test myself in the sternest ways, that I was always able to return to myself, to be my own priest, pupil, parent, child, husband, and wife" (qtd. in Capper 289). This sense of self-sufficiency is lost because Newell makes the words serve more as a lament than as a statement of pride. The final phrases come from a journal entry Fuller made in 1844[6] which, in context, reads:

> O it is wonderful to look back and see how, with *such* an inspiration as I have always had, my outward form has been blighted, and distorted, my mental powers, my soul steeped in anguish. Thou art not that. I must, shall conquer, though now I feel weary, and so sad, I have not a right to say I will. With the intellect I always have always shall overcome [sic], but that is not half the work. The life: the life Oh, my God! shall the life never be sweet! (Fuller 24)

While these lines come closer to the sense of despair that Newell invokes, there is still a strong determination to use her mind and the strength she gathers from her intellectual work, as she has always done, to overcome the hardships she has to endure. There is a definite sense of the strength and power of her intellect, and of the central role it plays in her life and sense of herself.

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points out, in her biography of Fuller, while Fuller described herself as Giovanni Angelo Ossoli's wife, there is no documentary evidence of the marriage having taken place.

[5] Thanks to Charles Capper for identifying this part for me.

[6] Capper cites the journal entry as May 1844; von Mehren cites August 1844. The Fruitlands Museum, where the journals from that year are kept, simply says 1844. Thanks to Mike Volmar, curator at the Fruitlands Museum, for his help with this.

Newell returns to Fuller for the conclusion of her article and quotes from a letter Fuller wrote to her mother while in Italy in the late 1840's. In this letter Fuller hints, albeit rather obliquely, at her relationship with Ossoli and the birth of their son:

> Were you here, I would confide in you fully, and have more than once, in the silence of the night, recited to you those most strange and romantic chapters in the story of my sad life.... I am sure that you will always love your daughter, and will know gladly that in all events she has tried to aid and striven never to injure her fellows. In earlier days, I dreamed of doing and being much, but now I am content with the Magdalen to rest my plea hereon, "*She has loved much.*" (qtd. in von Mehren 290)

Newell introduces the final quotation – "In earlier days, I dreamed of doing and being much, but now I am content with the Magdalen to rest my plea hereon, "*She has loved much*" – by describing her as "Margaret Fuller, who became Ossoli, and the mother of a son" (104). Fuller's invocation of the Magdalen, washing Christ's feet while he was a guest in the house of the Pharisees (Luke 7.36-50), follows closely on Newell's image of the "magnificent serenity" of the "Madonna della Sedia, with the babe in arms, little ones clustered about her knee" (104).

Newell's (presumably) deliberate misquoting of Fuller, her conflation of various different ideas, and her use of Fuller out of context raises several questions, not least of which must be, why does Newell use Fuller at all? What does Fuller, an avowedly intellectual woman and a renowned feminist writer, provide that other less difficult women might not more easily and more seamlessly provide? After all, Newell has to *mis*quote Fuller to support her point. In doing so, she makes an intellectual woman's words appear to deny the possibility of a satisfying intellectual life and, by extension, a satisfying working life for a woman. Fuller wanted to be a mother, she had a son later in life, and she was very aware of her own sexuality and desire; but she was also deeply

committed to women as full and active participants in public intellectual and political life. For Newell, then, this is an act of co-opting a publicly intellectual woman, a woman who was "given a more immediate intellectual recognition by brilliant men than has ever been accorded to any other American woman," into a narrative of initially frustrated but eventually realized domesticity through marriage and motherhood. This recuperation of a woman who for a large part of her life functioned outside conventional narratives of domesticity makes a powerful frame for Newell's argument. It constructs an implicit narrative of progress from professional to domestic life, from intellectual, public work to domesticity and the pleasures of husband and son, just as Newell's argument asserts that at best, women's success in paid work can only be temporary and that, for a woman, "marriage, not her choice of profession, is to be the final arbiter of her destiny" (101).

This narrative of a woman's inevitable progress from public to private, from the workplace to the domestic, sets up Newell's discussion of the "failure" of women in business and the professions. Her focus for much of the article is not, as the title might suggest, women's working lives. Instead, she tends to focus on women's *married* lives and the reasons why marriage removes women from the paid labour force. But Newell's discussion of women's working and married lives is fraught with contradictions. Through these "discursive contestations," we can begin to uncover the "text's dis-eased relation to itself" that is central to Rosemary Hennessy's symptomatic readings of texts (94). Understanding the internal tensions generated by these contestations can highlight the contradictions of the dominant ideological position and the lived experiences of the women it claims to represent. While the explicit text of Newell's article does, for the most part, confirm the assumptions and expectations of an ideological position that has an

interest in announcing the "failure of the professional woman," the contradictions within the text undermine that position even as the text appears to support it. These contradictions suggest that the relationship between women's domestic and working lives is more a matter of negotiation than the characterization of the two as mutually exclusive suggests. Central to these contradictions is Newell's own position as author. Newell was, at the time she wrote this article, a professional journalist but she was also married in 1905 and had a son the following year. She is herself, within the bounds of her own argument, a contradiction in terms: a woman with both a professional career and a family. The contradictions of her status as author in relation to the content and stance of her own text are never revealed: nowhere does she refer to her own situation, and the only hint is the double-barreled *O'Conner-Newell*. There are contradictions inherent in the material conditions of the text's production, as well as discursive contradictions within the article itself.

That Newell's own lived experience – her objective reality – does not appear to support the ideological stance she takes in her article only serves to reinforce the importance of the kind of symptomatic readings advocated by Hennessy. This text's "dis-eased" relationship with the conditions of its own production highlights the contestatory forces at work when the hegemonic ideological position is so naturalized as to deny the objective lived experiences of those it seeks to constrain. That a woman whose own experiences refute those ideological assertions should continue to reproduce the hegemonic ideological positions that deny her experiences leads inevitably to contradictory and contestatory elements within the text, to discursive crises that can point the way to better understandings of the ideological crises that produce them. In such a

text, the production of possibilities for subversion occurs simultaneously with the reproduction of the hegemonic ideological position and, to use Teresa de Lauretis' term, it is the resulting "cracks" (25) that present the opportunity for radical social transformation. Reading these cracks in Newell's text, these discursive crises in the attempted reproduction of a dominant ideological position, helps us better understand what was at stake in early twentieth-century debates around women's working and domestic lives.

Newell's opening paragraph sets up the article's central question as being the "*almost always enforced choice* between public life and the home, between business and true wifehood and motherhood" (98; italics added). This "enforced choice," almost an oxymoron, presents women in business and the professions as having little control over their decisions and, to a large extent, this was probably usually the case. The *choice* was *enforced* in ways that were both explicitly legislated and less obviously imposed. Mary Kinnear describes some of the ways in which women were obliged to leave paid employment when they married, using the example of Manitoban school boards and their policies on married women teachers as her example (139-140). Joy Parr points out in her 1985 article on women's labour in the twentieth century that women's choices were often circumscribed by influences and pressures that were less explicit but no less powerful:

> The choice to leave paid work was not so much a decision between equally tenable options as the acknowledgment, and acceptance, of a belief insistently inculcated by a patriarchal culture – that women did harm to themselves and the men with whom they competed when they worked for wages. (Parr 82)

The "choice" is little more than a formality – and not even really a choice at all. Penina Migdal Glazer and Miriam Slater describe the situation as being one in which women in the paid labour force were fighting a "silent war" against conventional expectations about

women's lives: "marriage, it was understood, presented an either/or choice: one could not have a husband and a career" (58). This is not to say that some women did not continue in business and professional careers after marriage, and even after having children, but Newell's articulation of the "almost always enforced choice" stresses the intense pressure against which women would have to act in order to do so.

The question of marriage and the part it plays in cutting short women's careers remains central throughout Newell's article. From her characterization of the decision between paid work and marriage as the "whole conflict" for working women to her contrasting images of the business woman balancing precariously on a high stool and the mother gathering her children around her knees, this "choice" is at the centre of her discussion of women's working lives. She cites marriage as the cause of women not staying in the paid labour force long enough to succeed, and she is very clear that this is not something for which women should be criticized or that should be changed:

> Her ultimate thought generally is, and should be – why not? – marriage; and marriage, not her choice of profession, is to be the final arbiter of her destiny. She may go on – in many cases she would prefer to go on – or she may stop. All depends on the "inexpressible he." (Newell 101)

This double assertion, that marriage "is, and should be" a woman's ultimate thought, simultaneously reinforces and undermines the ideological position it attempts to construct. That marriage *is* the "final arbiter of [a woman's] destiny" implies that this is unproblematically – naturally – the case: all women want to marry, and that desire is uppermost in their minds even in the workplace. The more determined *should be* seems to reinforce this: it is not only natural but it is also right for women to privilege marriage over other thoughts. But, this *should be* also implies that this is not the case for all women. The naturalizing function of the *is* which constructs women's desire for

marriage as something self-evident and entirely appropriate is undermined by the prescriptive and disciplinary *should be* which attempts to buttress nature with ideology and only succeeds in weakening its pretence of self-evidence.

Newell asserts, quite explicitly, that one of the reasons for women failing to "make good" (99) in the workplace is that employers do not expect them to be permanent employees:

> the explanation is this, first and foremost, that, floating in the misty future of every woman's contemplation is the mirage, shall we call it? of marriage that shall bring economic freedom. Just about the time a professional man receives his first conspicuous promotion, his former feminine colleague is most thoroughly engrossed with maternal duties, having had all of a "career" that she cared for. Therein lies the chief weakness of woman's position in the professions, though her crown of glory otherwise. (Newell 101)

Again, marriage is cited as the cause of women's "failure" in the public workplace. The incompatibility of "conspicuous promotion" and childbirth makes women unable to compete on an equal footing with their male counterparts. Women's bodies and the domestic narrative that attaches to them enforce a "choice" that precludes professional and business success. But Newell also raises another important question here. While she appears to support a position that sanctions the removal of married women from the public workplace and that expects men to support their wives, she undercuts that support with her description of a "marriage that shall bring economic freedom" as a "mirage." The idea that a man should be able to support his wife was central to arguments around the so-called "family wage" that dominated questions of women's labour in the early twentieth century. This idea – which was "always … more of an ideal than a reality" (Kinnear 16) – was used to defend lower wages for women (who were not deemed to be in need of a family wage, despite evidence that many women worked to support their

families) and discriminatory employment practices (such as those which required women to resign on marriage). Newell's simultaneous invocation of the idea of the family wage and subversion of that with the characterization of it as illusory complicates the question of the family wage and women's "economic freedom" in marriage. The text's discursive crisis replicates the ideological contradictions of a position that, on the one hand, supported the idea of the family wage as a way to enforce a traditional family structure, but, on the other hand, failed to take into account the realities both of women working to support families and of wages that were often too low for men to be able to take on the responsibilities expected of them.

Newell's argument that "working at any professional employment has to a woman the aspect of a temporary makeshift or an amusement" (101) also invokes questions about the economic discrimination that faced women in the paid labour force. To characterize women's paid labour as a "temporary makeshift" further reinforces the assumption that women are merely filling in time before marriage; to characterize it as an amusement invokes the common assumption that, in particular, middle-class women were working for reasons that had little to do with financial need. Women, it was argued, were not working out of necessity but instead out of a desire to supplement already secure financial situations. This argument both supported the notion of the family wage and was supported by it, and was used to justify lower wages for women and differential pay scales based on gender.[7] But as Veronica Strong-Boag points out, women often worked to support their families and made important contributions to their families' financial situations: "socialized to a greater sensitivity to domestic relationships … girls of all

classes were especially susceptible to the economic claims of family" (*New Day* 48). But while a man's economic support of his family was taken for granted and even codified in the political notion of the family wage, a woman's financial obligations to *her* family were either ignored or subjected to rigorous scrutiny. As Kinnear points out, attempts to justify shocking differentials in wages "dwelt on the fact that men had dependents.... Women who had dependents were ignored" (134-5). The ideological position that characterized women's paid labour as an "amusement" had very material effects on women's lives, justifying low wages and forced resignations, and setting up expectations about the reasons why women entered the paid labour force that could then be used against them.

Newell makes her point about marriage and working life perhaps most explicitly at the beginning of her article when she sets up a taxonomy of women in the public workplace. She cites an unnamed man who, when asked about women in business, divides working women in three categories:

> In answer to the question of what he thought of the woman in business, a man said he had known but three kinds – the kind that married, the discontented, unhappy kind, uneven in its works, and the desexed kind. The last, he said, was the only successful kind. (Newell 98)

The assumptions on which this simplistic classification are based were common ideas and opinions about women and about appropriate roles for women. This classification draws on conventional stereotypes about working women, stereotypes that articles in later years strove to undercut with their constant assertions of the femininity and maternal nature of the working women they profiled and discussed. Newell's use of it denies the

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[7]Kinnear points out that, in the case of teaching, often "the maximum female salary was less than the minimum male salary" (134).

specificities of individual women's lived experiences by containing them within a taxonomy based on gendered stereotypes and an ideology that only values women for their domestic and reproductive potential.

The first of these "three kinds" of women is the "thoroughly feminine woman in business" who is "the most common phenomenon of all, and at the same time the despair of the 'statistician'" (Newell 98). Drawing on the common assumption that working women were merely working until they were able to (and perhaps in order to) find a husband. Newell presents an image of a woman who explicitly trades on her sexuality in order to succeed:

> Often she makes a cometlike success, through the combination of pretty dress, pretty manners, and a seasoning of professional information which, by wiles too deep for average penetration, she employs with deadly results in conquest. How the staid dictums of Cooley on "Torts" or of Butler on "Diagnostics" could be added to a woman's armory of coquetry is as unfathomable a riddle as woman herself. Marriage, however, swallows up this charming invader with saving frequency. (98)

The workplace becomes sexualized by the presence and behaviour of women who, ironically, exploit the details of the public sphere to secure their own place in the domestic sphere. This success in the workplace is, however, undercut by women's reliance on appearance and personality rather than on knowledge or ability. Again, female bodies and sexuality become a liability in the paid labour force and lead to women leaving the paid labour of business and the professions for the unpaid labour of the domestic sphere. While she is in the public sphere, a woman is a "charming invader" but her retreat into marriage is both natural and inevitable.

But women in this class who do not get "swallow[ed] up by marriage" pose more of a problem in ideological terms. These "discontented, unhappy" women (Newell 98)

are only saved from suffering by the chivalry and the "charitable inclination" of employers who cannot but help when faced with the "intimation, delicately conveyed, that starvation is imminent" (Newell 99). These women's "natural" desires for domesticity are left unsatisfied and, through their prolonged and unhappy participation in paid labour, are perverted into pathetic replicas of their more appropriate expressions:

> No caller ever comes so inopportunely that she will not make tea or lunch for her; and for a him she has been known in the late hours of the evening to concoct a pie, biscuits, or a cake, in pure love of showing off her housewifely accomplishments. (Newell 98-9)

While perfectly suited for marriage, these women have to contain their natural desires for the responsibilities of the domestic sphere: these are women "equal to keeping a home beautifully, but homeless, that is, lodging in hall bedrooms, or striving precariously to keep life together and satisfy home instincts in studios or tiny flats" (Newell 98). Not only does the frustration of working women who should have been "swallow[ed] up by marriage" change the ways in which those women function in the domestic sphere, or a version of that, it also changes the ways in which they experience the labour force. These women do not enjoy the "cometlike success" of the "thoroughly feminine woman" who then succeeds in a winning a husband; rather, they are "perennial seekers, permanent applicants, who have not even made a success of a sort" (Newell 98). Their experience of the paid workplace is constructed by their inability to enter fully into the domestic life that would be their most appropriate occupation.

Nevertheless, Newell concedes, these "discontented, unhappy" women achieve some kind of success in the paid labour force. Such women are part of a "class of women who do work bravely and conscientiously, and refuse to trade up upon the fact that they are women or seek concessions that would not be made to a man" (Newell 99). This

appeal to the idea of a meritocracy in the public workplace that would ensure women succeeded through effort and ability rather than through any misguided chivalric assistance was common in arguments that supported women's entrance into paid labour. The competition for jobs in the workplace could then be constructed not as a battle of the sexes but as a contest in which the most-qualified individual would succeed. But Newell undercuts this more positive image of women succeeding through the recognition of merit and effort with the assertion that "most professional women of the conscientious, hard-working sort are always tired out and nervous, often sad and discontented" (Newell 99). Success comes with a price, and that is framed in terms of the kind of nervous disorders that so characterized medical discourses concerning women's health in late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Newell also undercuts the idea of women's success with her dismissive comment that these successful women are "too few to count in the balance" (99). The successes of individual women are eclipsed by the general "failure" of woman as a class.

The third class of women, the "desexed" kind, receives more attention from Newell. While the most successful of the three kinds of women in professional terms, she is the least acceptable in ideological terms. She has more completely overstepped the boundaries of her gendered role than the first two kinds of women, and her life is so transgressive as to be either repulsive or incomprehensible:

> she herself has evolved from a decentered, aimless state into a something that dainty women find inexplicable, and that men call "a good fellow," while thanking Heaven in their hearts that all women are not like her.
>
> The desexed woman anchors herself firmly, and experiences a certain complacency in doing so, to the bleachers of life, paying her little quarter as cheerfully as may be. Then she tries to see the game from a man's point of view. She drinks and "skates" just as a man might, sits around until morning in all-night restaurants, exchanges conversations on all subjects, sustains herself with a

> cocktail on rising and a cigarette at intervals, and tries to believe, and even convinces men, that there is no women's nonsense about her. To sheltered women she is incomprehensible. Other women see in her one answer to the problem how to be happy with nothing to think about but work, and are appalled. (Newell 99)

The price to be paid for success, a heavier price than the fatigue and discontent cited earlier, is this evolution into something inhuman, into a "something." Her denial of her sex is so far from an acceptable model of femininity as to render her lifestyle "incomprehensible" to women who do embody that ideal. While she may be admired, she is neither envied nor desired. She has, in order to succeed, denied the conventional model of ideal or natural womanhood – marriage, motherhood, and even, by implication, heterosexuality. Even the metaphors used to describe her behaviour are stereotypically masculine: she "anchors herself … to the bleachers" and "[plays] her little quarter" (Newell 99). The price of success in the public workplace is isolation and the misunderstanding and disapproval of others as well as complete disconnection from the domestic sphere that should be her "natural haven" (Newell 98). The question of why professional and business women fail to "make good" in the public workplace is reconfigured into a discussion of what it is about being a woman that is incompatible with success outside the domestic sphere.

In addressing these questions, Newell makes a distinction between those elements that are naturally present in women's characters and bodies which suit them for lives in the private rather than the public sphere and those elements that are the result of education or training. She distinguishes between women's "natural handicaps" and their "self-imposed" limits (Newell 103). Effectively separating *nature* and *nurture*, Newell argues that it is sometimes easier to overcome the restrictions of nature than it is to

overcome learned ways of being. Newell begins her discussion of women's "natural handicaps" with the sweeping assertion that "women are temperamentally unfitted for struggle in the open arena" (100). Drawing on a highly recognizable equation, Newell aligns women's nature with emotion rather than with reason. She describes women as "creatures to be swayed by sympathies, to be appealed to through the heart," and as lacking "coolness of judgment" (Newell 100). The natural sympathy and inability to maintain a professional distance from situations and individuals render women failures in a business or professional context. Newell does not criticize women for possessing these characteristics; however, she *does* criticize them for taking those characteristics out of the domestic and into the public sphere:

> No one likes a woman less for all this, only, in the phrase of the society world, "she does not belong." The world outside the home is so conditioned that sympathy, sweetness, tender-heartedness are all liabilities of the most dangerous type. Woman comes to the contest burdened not only with them, but with a more highly specialized nervous organization, a deficient education usually for the task before her, even when she has the college "isms" at her fingers' ends, and a love for home that active business life in almost every instance prohibits. (101)

Women's natural deficiencies are not only emotional but also physical. The burden of a "highly specialized nervous organization," a euphemistic reference, perhaps, to women's reproductive capacity, renders a woman unsuitable for life outside the domestic sphere in which she *does* belong. Newell's assertion that "no one likes a woman less for all this" is important for its implication that these characteristics constitute an ideal of womanhood which deserves and receives society's approval. The very qualities that make her a domestic success make her a public failure.

Women's education, described dismissively as a collection of "college 'isms'," is deemed "deficient" and inadequate to the role women would have to fulfill in the public

workplace, although Newell does not delineate the ways in which that is so. Newell goes on to support her point about women's education with claims that women simply do not know enough to be successful in business and professional life. She quotes an unidentified "she" who, in turn, quotes Rudyard Kipling:

> "Women don't know anything – very much," said the cleverest business woman I know, when asked for a clue to the cause of the failure in general. "Kipling's 'Lord, what do they understand?' applies to more women than the objectionable servant girls he spoke about," said she. "Not that I believe that men have all the brains, but their experience in a shrewd worldly environment helps to conceal what they don't know, whereas women's evolution from simple home surroundings favors exaggerating her ignorance." (Newell 100)

Women's failure in the public workplace is a function not of nature or some deficiency of intelligence of aptitude but a function of her education in the domestic sphere and of her lack of experience. Women's "evolution" from "*simple* home surroundings" contrasts with the "shrewd worldly" experience that allows men to function more successfully in the public workplace.

Newell proceeds to discuss other ways in which the material conditions of women's lives influence and constrain their possibilities for success in the white-collar workforce. She turns to the question of the kind of support women can expect from colleagues and employers, and from home and family. She explicitly acknowledges that men and women cannot compete equally inside the workplace because of the differences in their lives outside it. Again, the example she chooses returns to the conflict between domesticity and the paid workforce: "No man faces in business the alternative of giving up home and children. There is some one always willing and glad to provide these for him, if he has the inclination and ability to support them" (Newell 101). This emphasis on the support of the domestic sphere recalls Kinnear's point about the importance of the

domestic sphere to the successful male professional, and Newell's understanding of the importance of the domestic sphere acknowledges the combination of material, emotional, and intellectual support a wife often provides:

> something might be said of the part that many women play in supplementing, even in supplying the intellectual resources of their husbands to make them what they are in their professions. A wife behind the scenes does oftentimes more to advance a man's worldly station than a whole library of Blackstones. If brilliant women got half the mental assistance from husbands and brothers that many men got from wives and sisters, it is quite probable that I should be here explaining why professional women succeed, instead of why they fail. Many men have not been the greatest stockholders in the marital copartnership though they have drawn the biggest dividends. (102)

Newell's use of an economic metaphor for marriage draws attention to the often central role of women in the business and professional success of husbands, brothers, and fathers. It acknowledges the commonly ignored or taken for granted contribution that women in the domestic sphere made to the family economy. Women, Newell argues, do not receive that same sort of assistance from their male relatives or husbands and that fact can, in a large part, be used to explain women's "failure" in business and the professions. Again, Newell identifies the material conditions of women's lives as a reason for their limited successes rather than any inherent biological or temperamental weakness.

While Newell's article does bring together, for the present-day reader, many of the questions that dominated debates around women's participation in the white-collar workforce, it also presents many contradictory moments in which the overall endorsement of the dominant ideological position is called into question. Newell's focus on marriage reinforces the primacy of the domestic narrative in women's lives at the same time as her own experiences undermine that. Her identification of the material conditions of women's lives as integral to their success or failure refutes the more

conventional reliance on a narrative of biological determinism to which she gives little more than a passing reference. Yet, at the same time, she resorts to a rhetoric that appeals to the "natural" role of women as wives and mothers. Her insistence on the domestic in a discussion that is ostensibly about the public workplace reinforces how closely tied to the domestic women are at the same time as it acknowledges, however grudgingly, that individual women can and do succeed in labour outside the home. The difficulty of maintaining a coherent argument about "the failure of the professional woman" is highlighted by both the internal and external contradictions of Newell's text.

The Busy Man's Magazine

When *The Busy Man's Magazine* began publication, its digest format meant that it included articles from other leading international publications, predominantly magazines from Britain and the United States. It appears to have been standard practice in *The Busy Man's Magazine* to reproduce those articles in their entirety with little or no editorial intervention. The magazine usually provided short, point-form summary of the article's content as part of an ongoing attempt to make its articles useful and easily accessible to the "busy men" who constituted its desired readership. The editors condense Newell's article down to three main points that then stand as an explicatory epigraph for the article that follows:

> The Fair Sex is by Temperament Mentally Unfitted for Struggle in the Open Arena – Any Professional Employment has For her the Aspect of a Temporary Makeshift or an Amusement – Her Ultimate Thought Generally is and Should be Marriage. (*Busy* Sep. 1908, 89)

This point-form summary does more than provide a guide for readers as how best to spend their limited reading time. By highlighting only three aspects of Newell's argument, it privileges those three aspects and constructs a reading of the article that has

them as its focus. It guides the reader's experience of the text and focuses that experience in specific ways, and through that it constitutes an ideologically-inflected editorial intervention even as it is presented as something more neutral.

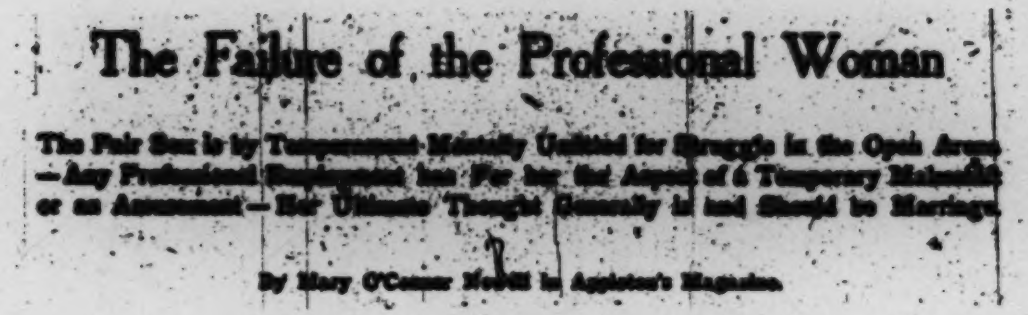
The Failure of the Professional Woman

Fig. 2. "The Failure of the Professional Woman," header from Mary O'Conner Newell, "The Failure of the Professional Woman," *The Busy Man's Magazine* Sep. 1908: 89.

The Busy Man's Magazine chooses to highlight, first, the point that women are "Mentally Unfitted" for the public workplace. This appeal to a conventional narrative of biological determinism privileges that narrative over the questions that Newell discusses in her article of women's "deficient" education and the lack of material support women can expect if they choose to pursue careers. There is no mention of the social and ideological barriers to women's business or professional success, and the reader's perspective is focused through this insistence on biology and women's natural unsuitability for participation in the white-collar workforce. Following on from that, the

second point highlights the temporary nature of women's employment, an argument that was often used against women entering the workforce at all or to constrain them inside the workforce with low wages and gendered wage differentials as well as other discriminatory employment practices. The summary also highlights the way in which Newell appears to place the responsibility for this lack of permanence on the women themselves and to construct women as not being entirely serious about their own careers. Paid labour is a "Makeshift," filling in time before marriage, or an "Amusement" – a construction that was used, again, to justify low wages on the grounds that women were not generally working out of economic necessity. The third point reflects the article's insistence on marriage as the "Ultimate Thought" of women and directs the reader's attention to Newell's assertion that "marriage, not her choice of profession, is to be the final arbiter of [a woman's] destiny" (Newell 101). The temporary nature of women's employment, the second point, is, in effect, explained in the third: marriage removes, and should remove, women from the paid labour force. So, the three-point summary – ostensibly a neutral attempt to aid the reader in making a choice about how to spend his or her reading time – guides the reader to a certain ideologically inflected reading of the text by highlighting specific ideas and arguments. It inevitably simplifies the article's content and in doing so reinforces the more conservative ideological position which the article articulates while effacing the complexities and contradictions it also contains.

Other than the three-point summary, the only other explicit editorial intervention in the *Busy Man's Magazine*'s reprint is the inclusion of two full-page illustrations. There is no indication, however, that the illustrations were not part of the original article and so the extent of this intervention is effaced. The illustrations can be read as editorial

comment as much as can any textual additions could and are worthy of critical attention. Their visual reinforcement of aspects of Newell's three-part taxonomy of working women echoes the ways in which the *Busy Man's Magazine*'s three-point summary highlights specific ideas and questions.

The first illustration appears on only the second page of the *Busy Man's Magazine*'s article and interrupts Newell's taxonomy. It depicts a couple being married by an elderly vicar, and the husband putting the ring on his bride's finger. The setting is very traditional: the Norman windows of the church appear to hold stained glass windows depicting saints and bishops, and there are lilies and other flowers in abundance behind the ornate communion rail. Both bride and groom are elegantly dressed and are, at least, from middle-class backgrounds, and they both look very serious about the ceremony of which they are the centre. The illustration's caption – "The natural haven of such women" – is centered at the bottom of the page and is quoted directly from Newell's text. It comes from her assertion that there are women who are suited to marriage, who are more than capable of keeping a house, and who are craving the domestic life, but who are obliged to make their way in business or the professions. The alternative she presents for "such women" in the sentence from which the caption is taken is not an attractive one: "or else they become hopeless derelicts, and worse, under the guise of following a skilled profession" (Newell 99). The assertion, in the caption, of marriage as a "natural haven" suggests two things: first, that marriage is part of a narrative of women's lives that is natural and appropriate, that women's biology leads them to marry, and that it is entirely appropriate for that to be the case; and second, that the commercial or professional world is in some way threatening or dangerous, and that marriage can provide a welcome refuge

from the demands which it places on women. Like the point in the three-point summary that declares "Her Ultimate Thought Generally is and Should be Marriage," the caption draws the reader's attention to a domestic narrative for women's lives even in a context that claims to be discussing women in the public sphere.

However, the composition of the illustration does more than that and further reinforces the desirability of marriage for women. In its depiction of a highly traditional church, it suggests the church's approval of marriage and motherhood as choices and roles for women. The husband, as a representative of the social order, is placing a ring on the finger of his bride who is depicted as completely passive. A woman's decision to abandon her career for marriage is, the illustration suggests, sanctioned by both church and society. This juxtaposition of religious and social approval reinforces the impossibility of genuine "choice" for women, and underscores the centrality of marriage in the debates around appropriate roles for women.

The second illustration appears as the seventh page of the *Busy Man's Magazine*'s reprint, only two pages before the end. Even so, it refers back to the same aspect of Newell's taxonomy of women as the first one. The caption – "perennial seekers, permanent applicants" – is taken from Newell's description of the fate that awaits the "thoroughly feminine woman in business" who cannot, for whatever reason, retreat to the "natural haven" of marriage but who continues to pursue a career. The illustration depicts three well-dressed, probably middle-class women climbing a staircase. The one at the top has her hand on the handle of a door on which is attached a sign that announces, "Position Vacant." The women appear tired – the one in the middle is stooping as she reaches the top of the staircase – and their heads are all downcast.

Fig. 3. "The natural haven of such women is marriage," illustration, from Mary O'Conner Newell, "The Failure of the Professional Woman," *The Busy Man's Magazine* Sep. 1908: 90.

They are all depicted from behind, making them into faceless, interchangeable figures rather than individuated women. There are three women for the one "Position Vacant" advertised by the anonymous "COMPANY" identified on the door. While the assertion of compulsory heterosexuality and women's "natural" role as wives and mothers is more complex in this second illustration, it is no less insistent. The first illustration presents the positive fate of women who are saved from the public workplace by marriage with all the concomitant approbation of church and society. The second presents the fate of women who are left in the public workplace, and who have to struggle to make their way in a world for which they are not naturally suited. These women are, in Newell's words, those who "we see failing and falling into the rear ranks all around us" (98); they are a dislocated group trying to make a living for themselves and who are "equal to keeping a home beautifully, but homeless" (98). The world of work is, as depicted in this illustration, neither attractive nor stable. The illustration does not even depict *working* women, but women exhausted and demoralized by a fruitless and relentless search for work. There is really no comparison between the anonymous women of the second illustration, heads bowed and faces obscured, and the elegantly-dressed bride of the first. Again, the "choice" between a working life and a married one is revealed as not really a choice at all. The first illustration is an endorsement of the choice to marry, and the second is a warning of the consequences of not making that choice.

well as presenting original articles.

Fig. 4. "Perennial seekers, permanent applicants," illustration from Mary O'Conner Newell, "The Failure of the Professional Woman," *The Busy Man's Magazine* Sep. 1908: 95.

Saturday Night

Saturday Night, while not a digest like *The Busy Man's Magazine*, drew for its content on reprinted news items and stories from publications in Britain and the United States as well as presenting original articles. With its column format and preference for shorter pieces, *Saturday Night* tended to summarize the main points of an article or print only short extracts with varying levels of editorial comment. *Saturday Night*'s reprint of Newell's article is, then, not unusual in its format and presentation. The unsigned reproduction in *Saturday Night* and its implicit critique of Newell's article both makes ironic and exposes the contradictions inherent in the original in ways that *The Busy Man's Magazine* direct reproduction and editorial reinforcement of Newell's stance does not. *Saturday Night* enables the reader to realize the contradictions that are contained within this particular articulation of a position that would constrain women's lives to purely domestic roles and would deny them full participation in the paid labour force. The critique in *Saturday Night* emerges from its articulation of the discursive crises that characterize Newell's original, the contradictions within both her argument and the conditions of her own authorship. The editorial voice that presents Newell's text highlights the text's internal contradictions, effectively producing an alternative text while claiming merely to reproduce the original.

In the *Saturday Night* item, the assertion of the original article's title is reconfigured as a question: "Is the Professional Woman a Failure?" That transformation immediately destabilizes Newell's argument by, literally, calling it into question. This destabilization is continued in the subtitle provided by *Saturday Night* and which answers the question posed in the title: "Mrs. Mary O'Conner Newell Has the Temerity to Assert

That She is." That Newell is described as having the "Temerity" to assert the failure of women in business and the professions suggests she is holding a position that is at unusual and cannot be easily supported. The implication of her *daring* to suggest that women have failed in the white-collar workplace undermines her argument even more than does the rephrasing of her original assertion as a question. The opening paragraph goes on to place the article within a larger debate and to gesture towards the reason for its being reproduced in *Saturday Night*: "A good deal of interest attaches to the assertion made recently by Mary O'Conner Newell, herself a professional journalist, that women are failures in professional or commercial life." It draws the reader's attention to the topic of Newell's article, as well as making explicit Newell's own relationship to the subject matter.

It is Newell's own position that dominates most of the introductory paragraph. The inclusion of her full *married* name in the subtitle draws attention to Newell and the contradictory relationship to her text in a way that does not happen either in the original or in the reprint in *The Busy Man's Magazine*. The inclusion of the indicator of her marital status immediately places her outside the taxonomy of women she sets up in her original article and which is reproduced briefly in *Saturday Night*. She is, by virtue of being *Mrs.* Newell, one of "the kind that married." But she is also, by virtue of being a "professional journalist," a woman who has not failed in the public workplace by leaving it for marriage and the domestic sphere. The irony of a professional woman journalist who is also married announcing that women cannot succeed in the public workplace is made explicit. The introductory paragraph goes on to quote Newell's comment about the widespread nature of women's participation in the white-collar labour force:

> women in the United States have entered into competition, with men, in practically all the other gainful occupations of life, and observers have noted this competition as one of the most significant "signs of the times."

Newell is, though, part of that widespread participation, and her dual role as a professional journalist and as a wife and mother is surely one of those "signs of the times" to which she refers. By focusing the reader's attention on this irony both in the title and in the introductory paragraph, the editorial voice influences the way in which the reader approaches Newell's argument. Just as *The Busy Man's Magazine* focuses the reader's attention on marriage and the temporary nature of women's employment, *Saturday Night* focuses it on the contradictory nature of Newell's own position and the topical nature of the debate.

The presentation of the argument and the ways in which the excerpts are introduced and organized in *Saturday Night* further undermine the stability and coherence of Newell's original text. The anonymous editorial voice aligns itself with the reader, using "we" throughout: we read, we gather, etc. Newell is described throughout as asserting or claiming her points, rather than as offering evidence to support them. The phrase "Mrs. Newell says" is used throughout, often inserted in the middle of sentences. At one point, as *Saturday Night* summarizes Newell's point that while "the 'thoroughly feminine woman is constantly invading the business field … marriage, says Mrs. Newell, is constantly removing her from the conflict." The inclusion of "*Mrs.* Newell says" in the middle of a statement that women leave their jobs when they marry undermines both the assertion and the validity of Newell's own position. This technique is used throughout the reprint, and each time the irony of that central contradiction is invoked.

In its three-point summary, *The Busy Man's Magazine* focuses the reader's attention on the assertion that women are "by Temperament Mentally Unfitted" for professional and business careers and on the reasons why women's psychological makeup will not allow them to succeed. *Saturday Night*, in contrast, omits the section from Newell's original that focuses on women's "natural handicaps" (Newell 103) and her extended discussion of the ways in which women's minds and bodies are unsuitable for the public workplace. While Newell argues that women are to blame for their own "failure," *Saturday Night* immediately points out that she undermines her own argument with her assertion that women are held back by lack of support rather than by biological inadequacy:

> On the other hand, says Mrs. Newell, "if brilliant women got half the mental assistance from husbands and brothers that many men get from wives and sisters, it is quite probable that I should be here explaining why professional women succeed, instead of why they fail."

This inclusion of women's social and cultural limits and the omission of their biological and psychological ones changes the focus onto the material conditions of women's lives – conditions that can be changed – rather the immutable conditions of biology.

It is interesting, and seemingly contradictory, that *Saturday Night* chooses to end its item on Newell's article much as Newell's original ends. *Saturday Night* omits Newell's use of Fuller as a framing device but it does include Newell's paired images of the business woman as an insecure, inappropriate figure and the "Madonna della Sedia" with her children gathered around her knees. The domestic is, once again, reinforced as the only genuinely appropriate space for women to occupy. But this image cannot be read in the same way here as it would be either in the original or in *The Busy Man's Magazine* reprint. Coming after such a shortened, edited, and ironized version of the

original with a strong emphasis on the social and cultural reasons why women do not succeed, this insistence on women's "natural" maternal role cannot possibly carry the same rhetorical weight as it does in the original. What comes before it in *Saturday Night* undercuts the idealized image of the "Madonna" even as that image is being reproduced. The disjunction in terms of rhetoric and the material conditions of the text's authorship influence the reading of this final excerpt in *Saturday Night*. The contradictions of Newell's own situation, brought to the foreground by the constant references to her marital status throughout the reprint, contrast with the containment of women in the domestic that this final image attempts to assert, destabilizing it through that contradiction and exposing the ideological incompatibilities of Newell's relationship to her own text.

Saturday Night's more active interventions in the reproduction of Newell's article stand in contrast to the less intrusive commentary provided by *The Busy Man's Magazine*. The editors of *The Busy Man's Magazine* were careful to present themselves as disinterested, detached purveyors of "the Cream of the World's Magazines" (Aug. 1906) in the form of long, complete articles, while the column format of *Saturday Night* is more suited to a more condensed, fragmentary item than to a complete reprint. While the reproduction in *The Busy Man's Magazine* maintains and reproduces the ideological position of the original, reinforcing it through its three-point summary and illustrations, the item in *Saturday Night* goes beyond simple reproduction to question the premise of the article and to undermine some of the assumptions on which it is based. Newell's original article can help focus a present-day reader's attention on some of the central questions in the debate around women's participation in the white-collar workforce, and

the two reprints can help focus attention on some of the contestations and contradictions that emerge from those questions.

Chapter Two

"This feminine invasion"

Mary O'Conner Newell bases her article "The Failure of the Professional Woman" on a number of conventional assumptions about women's public and private lives and about the ideological separation of the spheres. Much of the early twentieth-century debate around women's entry into the white-collar workplace centered around those same assumptions. Questions about appropriate spheres of activity and concern for men and women, and about the social and individual consequences of women moving out of the domestic and into the public sphere, were the basis for many of the articles in *Maclean's* and *Saturday Night* that dealt with women in the public workplace. While Newell's article provided a useful focus for the identification of those assumptions, the breadth and variety of articles in *Maclean's* and *Saturday Night* on white-collar women gives me a chance to explore more broadly how those assumptions were both reproduced and challenged in the first thirty years of the twentieth century. Central to Newell's article and to almost all of the discussion about women in the white-collar workplace in *Maclean's* and *Saturday Night* was the concept of separate spheres, of the private and the public, the domestic and the professional.

It is almost certainly unnecessary to point out that the concept of separate spheres has a long and complicated history, and that it does not and never did accurately represent women's and men's lived experiences. At the same time, it is still important to acknowledge the power of this concept and the very real material effects that occur when

it is invoked to support or explain specific practices. As Janet Wolff points out in her article "The Culture of Separate Spheres," "although by no means uniform or complete, this separation … set the terms of existence for men and women of all classes into the twentieth century" (25). Pointing to the dynamic nature of the construction of this concept and its maintenance, Wolff describes the separation of the spheres as a "continuing process" ("Culture" 25) that is "reinforced by cultural ideologies, practices, and institutions" ("Culture" 12). She also argues, however, that while cultural practices "confirmed and reinforced" the concept of separate spheres, they also "reproduced that ideology … in ambiguous (and sometimes subversive) ways" ("Culture" 25). As I pointed out in Chapter One, texts contain the possibility of both the reinscription and the subversion of the ideology they might appear to reproduce. While the debate around women's entry into the white-collar workplace relied to a large extent on a conventional rhetoric of the separation of the spheres, it called into question the assumptions on which that separation was based at the same time that it reproduced it. Questions of space -- metaphorical space and literal space – were questions of ideology, and the complex and often contradictory attempts to answer those questions can help us understand the ways in which space is gendered and is used to produce and maintain gendered differences and inequalities both between the home and the workplace and within the workplace itself.

Maintaining the gendered segregation of public and private required the mapping of the spaces of ideology onto the material spaces of lived experience. In the debates around women's entry into the white-collar workplace in the early twentieth century, the separate spheres of ideology – public and private, professional and domestic – found material equivalents in the office and the home. This spatial metaphor, the separation of

the spheres, and its material equivalence were used on both sides of the debate. Its implicit narrative of women leaving one sphere, the home, and entering another, the office, was central and was used both to reinforce the containment of women in the domestic and to subvert that position and the assumptions on which it was based. Both sides of the debate concerned themselves with both metaphorical and literal space, and anxieties about women's perceived encroachment on masculine ideological space were equated with the physical presence of increasing numbers of women in the literal space of the public workplace.

When questions of space were treated figuratively, certain metaphors developed and began to dominate the rhetoric of the debates. Parallel spatial metaphors were used to describe the entry of increasing numbers of women into the white-collar workplace: women were described as *invaders* and as *pioneers* in the public sphere. Both metaphorical constructions contain the sense of women actively moving out of one space and entering the other, and through their different resonances they delineate the perceived political, social, and ideological ramifications of that movement. In *The Misrule of Metaphor*, Bryn Pinchin outlines, through her critique of the work of Paul Ricoeur, two central functions of metaphor with respect to relations of power. First, the ideological function of metaphor is to "negotiate and integrate, to consolidate and conserve" the integrity of a particular community and its identity (Pinchin 39). The ideological function of metaphor re-invents the new to sustain and preserve the existing power relations and structures. Second, the utopian function of metaphor seeks to contest, rather than to legitimate, relations of power (Pinchin 57). By questioning and contesting existing power relations through meaning-making, metaphor's utopian function subverts

those power relations and constructs alternative possibilities for social and ideological transformation. In the context of debates around women's white-collar work, the spatial metaphor of public and private, office and home, finds an ideological function in the metaphor of *invasion* and a utopian function in the metaphor of *pioneering*.

Defining women's entry into the public workplace as an *invasion* suggests a need to shore up the boundaries of that public space against change and redefinition. The ideological function of the invasion metaphor attempts to maintain the integrity of that space as masculine and to preserve the existing relations of power. One of the most explicit examples of this metaphor of invasion is in an article by Herbert J. Hapgood, reprinted in *The Busy Man's Magazine* in 1906, in which Hapgood refers to the entry of women into the business workplace as "this feminine invasion" (136). He goes on to describe the influx of women into clerical and other business-related occupations:

> Stenography opened the office door for women, and young and old, they rushed in to take up this clean, pleasant employment for which in many ways they are extremely well adopted [sic]. Once inside they were not slow to extend their field of activity to book-keeping, correspondence and other lines which for years had been exclusively for men. (Hapgood 136)

Six months earlier, an article by "One of Them in The Grand Magazine" refers to "an unwarranted feminine ambition to invade fields that have always been reserved to masculine labour" (123), and in 1923 *Maclean's* published an article titled "Canadian Women Invading Insurance Profession" (Bell 15 Aug. 1923: 62). Newell refers to the "'thoroughly feminine' woman in business" as a "charming invader" who is, thankfully, "swallow[ed] up … with saving frequency" by marriage (98). The space of the public workplace is assumed to be – or at least to have been – rightfully gendered male and occupied exclusively by men.

The ideological function of the metaphor of invasion attempts to maintain existing power relations by reinforcing the boundaries between the public and the private. Anxieties about the preservation of clearly defined boundaries are configured in various ways – as concerns about women's morality and sexuality, about changes women might impose on the public workplace, and about the competition that might ensue between women and men for scarce jobs. Opposition to women's entrance into the public workplace can then be characterized as an attempt to preserve both the status quo within the white-collar workplace and the integrity of the boundaries of that space. This opposition sets up the public workplace as a space that is as secluded and enclosed as the domestic sphere against which it defines itself. The representation of women's entry into the public workplace as an invasion signifies women's physical presence as something unwelcome and the women themselves as a hostile or colonizing force. Such an incursion can then be resisted and the concern with the maintenance of boundaries is at least sanctioned, if not encouraged. Men can be represented as innocent defenders of what is originally and, by implication, rightfully theirs, and women as predatory and threatening. The metaphor of invasion is, then, an attempt to "consolidate and conserve" (Pinchin 39) the gendered nature of the public workplace through a spatial metaphor that has at its centre anxieties about the integrity of the boundaries of the public sphere.

Representing women's entry into the business or professional workplace as an act of *pioneering* suggests, instead, that paid work is a public space which can accommodate women, and it appeals to a recognizable figure, the pioneer, who was an integral part of a nascent settler colony mythology. The utopian function of the pioneering metaphor attempts to construct the public sphere as a landscape open for discovery and settlement

rather than as a space that is already occupied and mapped. The 1923 article cited earlier refers to the Canadian women who were making careers for themselves in the insurance business as being "imbued with the pioneer spirit" (Bell 15 Aug. 1923: 62). A 1906 article in *The Busy Man's Magazine* refers to engineering as a field in which "the pioneers of the secluded sex have already staked out their claims" (Hard 48). In the same year, an article in *Saturday Night* on the merging of the Ontario women's medical college with the University of Toronto describes Dr. Emily Stowe as having "the courage and perseverance of a pioneer" (Canadienne 8). Twenty-two years later, an article describes Stowe's daughter, Dr. Augusta Stowe Gullen, as a "brave pioneer … whose courage, endurance, and ability made the way clear and easy for women" (Ridley 29). When the woman in business or the professional woman is characterized as a pioneer, the public workplace is then conceived of as a place in which she can rightfully "stake [her] claims" rather than one that, as an invader, she must enter by force.

An important aspect of the parallel spatial metaphor of pioneering that differentiates it from the metaphor of invasion is the suggestion that the pioneer enters an unoccupied space[1] whereas the invader enters a space already occupied by others. This could go some way to pre-empt the accusation commonly leveled at working women that they were displacing men from jobs that were rightfully theirs. It also rewrites the public sphere as a new landscape – an *open* space – rather than the limited and enclosed space evoked by the metaphor of invasion, and sets it in contrast to the "secluded" space of the domestic. The characterization of individual women as pioneers in particular professions

[1] Obviously pioneers often *do* enter space that is already occupied by aboriginal peoples. But, the metaphor and the icon figure of the pioneer depends, for a large part, on the idea that they do not enter already occupied space.

or occupations also has very specific utopian functions, especially when used in biographical profiles of established business women or women professionals. Emphasizing that the difficult pioneering work has already been done effectively removes the responsibility of being the first woman in a particular field, and rewrites that field as a space that is more open to women than might, in reality, be the case. As Penina Migdal Glazer and Miriam Slater point out in *Unequal Colleagues*, women who succeeded in professions that had previously been exclusively male were often isolated and had to function without female colleagues and without the network of support and mentorship they might provide (136). The construction of a historical narrative of women pioneers in various fields suggests that the lonely work of pioneering has already been done and that the choice to enter business or the professions is now a perfectly viable one for middle-class women. The metaphor of pioneering does not, then, attempt to deny the border between public and private, but it does attempt to open up the space of the public sphere to women and to locate them in very specific ways within it.

What the spatial metaphors of pioneering and invasion have in common is the implicit acknowledgement that the entrance of women will irrevocably change the public sphere. Invaders destroy the space they take over and pioneers domesticate it, but in neither case does the space remain unchanged. The mapping of ideological space onto the physical space of the home and the office necessitated a reevaluation of both spheres of ideology – not just the office that now had to accommodate women and was, it was argued, changed by their presence. Whether the intent was the re-containment of women within the domestic sphere or the reconfiguration of the public sphere as a space in which women could take their place alongside their male colleagues, *both* spheres needed to be

rewritten in response to changing circumstances. While traditionalists might argue strongly for the maintenance of a clearly defined separation between the spheres, those boundaries and the spheres themselves can exist only in a close and mutually defining relationship to each other: there can be no public sphere without a separate and complementary domestic sphere, and vice versa. The redefinition of both the domestic and the public to justify and support particular ideological positions was, then, an important strategy on both sides of the debate.

The reevaluation of the domestic sphere was a complex and sometimes contradictory process. There appear, however, to be two main strands: first, the redefinition of the domestic in terms of the family home, whether to idealize the space or point out its limitations; and second, the definition of a domestic space for business or professional women outside the family home, whether they lived alone or with other women. Opponents of women's entrance into the public sphere had a vested interest in reinforcing the boundaries between the public and the private, and in consolidating the containment of women within the domestic sphere to maintain existing power relations. Those who supported women's white-collar employment did not often question those boundaries but instead questioned the mutual exclusivity of the spheres and, in doing so, affirmed women's ability to occupy both rather than having to make the "almost always enforced choice" (Newell 98) of one over the other. Both positions require a rethinking of the meaning and function of the domestic, and a new understanding – or a newly reaffirmed understanding – of how the domestic might stand in relation to the public workplace.

The reinforcement of an idealized domestic space, exemplified in the family home, was central to two opposing positions. First, it helped to maintain "the belief that a wife's place is in the home … [and] that wifely toil has a malignant influence on manhood" ("Business Girl's" 100). A 1907 article by Orison Swett Marden sets out a model of the ideal home: for a business man, home is "a place which, of all others, ought to be the most sacred, most peaceful, and the sweetest place in the world" (61). Marden goes on to argue that business or professional men have as much of a responsibility to maintain this domestic ideal as do their wives, and makes an explicit connection with a man's responsibilities in the workplace: he should attend to his wife just as he would to the "comfort and feelings of a stenographer or other woman in his employ" (1907: 62). Marden's argument is highly conventional in its assertion of the domestic as an idealized sanctuary from the rigours of public life, but it is unusual in its insistence on the responsibilities of *both* husband and wife for its maintenance. Second, the idealization of the domestic was used to pre-empt criticism of women who chose to enter the public workplace as being unfeminine. Supporters would often stress the exemplary domestic accomplishments of white-collar women, presenting images of women who could occupy and excel in both private and public spheres. John R. Desmond's 1908 article "Women Whose Minds Do Not Grow" only advocates women finding intellectual satisfaction outside the home after the acknowledgment that "there are not duties higher or greater than those of wifehood and motherhood" (91). Using an idealized vision of the domestic to justify women leaving the home might seem contradictory, but it does help avoid accusations that working women would abandon the domestic or were in some way opposed to it.

Another strategy employed on both sides of the debate was the attempt to get beyond the idealization of the domestic sphere and to provide a more realistic picture of marriage and family life. The acknowledgment of the often unrecognized labour that went into the maintenance of a family home could be used both to reassert the importance of women's domestic labour and to justify the decision to work for pay in the public workplace. This argument could be made through the exploration of the nature of women's labour within the home, and the assertion of the fact that women were already working – but that they were working without pay or public recognition. A 1909 article by F. M. Thompson foreshadows later feminist calls for the economic recognition of women's domestic labour, even as it argues that women should not be encouraged to take their labour outside the home:

> Let us see whether or not that which the wife produces in the home comes within the scope of economic production. What is she doing there? At a glance, we discern that she is producing things which are actually articles of commerce.... Moreover... she is performing services as distinctly and essentially related to the production of wealth as any similar work done by men in business houses. But this is not the full extent of the contribution she makes to the wealth of the nation. She bears children; that is to say, she produces labour. (66)

Thompson goes on to argue for a reevaluation of the "sanctity of the home" (66) from a position that draws attention to the problematic idealization of the domestic yet vehemently opposes married women leaving the domestic sphere to find paid employment. Using what is now a very familiar argument, Thompson argues that married women cannot devote adequate time to their homes and families if they are attempting to work outside the home: "in the majority of cases I have found that neglected, delicate children and dirty, ill-kept homes are the natural concomitants of the employment of married women" (68). Thompson argues that idealizing the domestic

while effacing the labour necessary to maintain it is an inadequate response, and the alternative is to "industrialize" the domestic while maintaining its containment of women and their labour.[2]

The acknowledgment that not all homes were happy and that not all husbands were adequate providers was also used to justify women's entry into the paid labour force. While there were attempts to reaffirm the domestic as an idyllic space that could both contain and satisfy women, the entrance of women into paid employment forced a reconsideration of that construction of the domestic that took a more realistic and less idealized perspective on the private sphere: "the 'home as haven' constituting a separate sphere for women ... becomes less appropriate as women enter the labour force" (Spain 7). Marden's article in the April 1908 issue of *Maclean's* admits that the domestic is not always the "most sacred, most peaceful, and the sweetest place in the world" (Marden 1907: 61), and that the work done there by women can be difficult and unpleasant. Marden points, as Newell does in the same year, to the ways in which women support their husbands' careers and how those wives are often unappreciated by their "indifferent, selfish, brutish husband[s]" (1908: 75). The domestic is not, then, an idyllic haven from the pressures and concerns of the public sphere, but rather a "condition of slavery ... under the beautiful guise of home" (Marden 1908: 77). The domestic ideal is rewritten as a "narrowing, strangling, shriveling" space (Marden 1908: 77), and one that can have at least as dangerous an effect on women as entry into the public sphere because "there is

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[2] This article is interesting in many other ways. Thompson's argument about the unregulated nature of women's domestic labour and its effects on reproductive potential and women's health foreshadows later feminist arguments on similar topics. It is interesting for its insistence on the centrality of women's labour not only to the domestic but also to the economic health of the nation. It stands out from other articles in *Maclean's* and *Saturday Night* on similar topics in its economic approach to the question of women's labour. It certainly deserves more attention than it is possible to give it here.

nothing more demoralizing outside of vice itself, than to be obliged to carry through life a stifled ambition" (Marden 1908: 78). The support of the male professional endeavour identified by Kinnear is rewritten here in the construction of a space that not only contains women but stifles them. The boundaries between the spheres are not in place, here, to maintain a natural order but to benefit professional and business men and to exploit the wives and other women who work to support them.

As well as the redefinition of the family home, the domestic choices of women who were living outside a marital or family home demanded a new version of the domestic sphere. Those who opposed women's labour were quick to point to the unsatisfying nature of the options open to single working women, and to the ways in which their domestic arrangements embodied deep (and natural) dissatisfactions with their choice of public over private labour. Newell, as discussed in Chapter One, describes the women who are "equal to keeping a home beautifully"(98) but have opted, instead, for professional or business careers which mean that they have had to forfeit that "home" for something far less stable. These women are constructed as "homeless, that is, lodging in hall bedrooms, or striving precariously to keep life together and satisfy home instincts in studios or tiny flats" (98). Even though they have somewhere to live, these women are "homeless" because they are living outside a marital or family home, living alone, and living in spaces and situations that cannot satisfy their "home instincts." They might have a material *home* but they do not have an ideological *home*.

It was in the interests of those who opposed women's paid labour to characterize working women's domestic arrangements as unsatisfactory, even when appearances might suggest otherwise. A 1907 article in *Maclean's* presents a disturbing picture of the

private life of a working woman. Anna S. Richardson of the *Woman's Home Companion* constructs a highly idealized version of family life and the home, then goes on to contrast that with what she presents as the grim reality of working women's domestic arrangements:

> You cannot expect the trim, self-contained girl at your elbow to admit that her perfectly appointed little apartment, her perfectly trained maid, her perfectly ordered life of dinners, clubs, theatres and opera parties spell failure. She says she is a success. In her heart she knows that when the last guest has gone, and the trim little maid has been dismissed, the exquisite little white apartment becomes a whited sepulcher in which the starved soul of the woman sits alone weeping. (Richardson 61)

Leaving aside the fact that women's lower wages probably meant that few white-collar women could have afforded an "exquisite little … apartment," Richardson's representation of domestic space is interesting. The domestic life of single working women is, despite every appearance of success, always a failure. It is an illusion, but it is one that the women themselves will refuse to acknowledge as such. Richardson constructs her picture of the domestic life of working women as an attempt to uncover the truth behind the "perfect" life that those women were assumed to lead, and in doing so she points to the central question behind this kind of redefinition of the domestic sphere. The "perfectly appointed little apartment" is revealed as inadequate compensation for the family home and all that it implies. The working woman is always alone, as the guests who necessarily leave at the end of the evening are no substitute for a husband and family. The "exquisite little white apartment" is rewritten as a "whited sepulcher" – a woman who chooses an independent working life and an alternative domestic space is represented as enduring a living death.

Another important question that this redefinition of the domestic sphere raises is how women could expect or obtain the requisite domestic support for their business or professional careers. Kinnear's argument that the domestic was a necessary complement to the professional is central here. The absence of the requisite domestic support system threatened the success of the professional endeavour and meant that women who had to manage their own domestic arrangements were effectively occupying and maintaining *both* spheres of ideology. Newell also points to the lack of material support women could expect to receive, and links that to women's "failure" in business and the professions: "If brilliant women got half the mental assistance from husbands and brothers that many men get from wives and sisters, it is quite probable that I should be here explaining why professional women succeed, instead of why they fail" (102). The "perfectly trained maid" of Richardson's article (61) is no substitute for the material, emotional, and social support of a wife. The depressed wages that many working women were obliged to accept make this even more problematic. While a man had to support a wife, he did not have to pay her for her domestic services; however, women had to either do their own domestic work or employ other women to perform material services, and they could not expect their domestic servants to provide other, less tangible kinds of support. While some articles that support women's paid labour take for granted the presence of paid domestic labour – despite it being very unlikely that many working women could afford such support – other articles actively criticize working women for exploiting the domestic labour of other women. An unsigned 1914 article in *Saturday Night* quotes the "modern woman writer" Beatrice Hastings on the question:

> It passes my understanding how a married woman can so demean herself for money in order to feel excused from doing her own housework. She is not

> thereby excused, but is resting on self-deception, for she invites indignities merely to provide economic independence for a servant, another female. ("Some" 25)

Married working women delude themselves into believing that participation in the public sphere exempts them from their responsibilities in the domestic sphere and, furthermore, they "[invite] indignities" by choosing to enter the public workplace. The provision of "economic independence" to another woman is then cited as the perpetuation of a cycle of women's self-deception and self-demeaning behaviour. Not only can women not reproduce or expect the kind of domestic sphere required to support successful business and professional careers, they exploit the labour of other women merely to produce an inadequate replica of the home.

Those who supported women's entrance into the public workplace had, then, to counteract those negative images with more positive choices for working women's domestic lives. A 1926 article by Myrtle B. Patterson in *Maclean's* presents one such alternative. The article's title, "Four Bachelor Girls Find A Real Home," highlights its redefinition of what *home* might mean, taking it beyond the marital and family home of the dominant discourse. Patterson opens, in an extended subtitle, by raising many of the central questions and concerns in this debate: "A shabby room in a shabby boarding house on a shabby street. How many thousand business girls call that home? Too many, by their own confession, and yet there is a way out. The four bachelor girls in this story found it, and it led to a home that was as cosy as it was manless" (56). What *home* means is then explicitly redefined within the article:

> A husband and housework would certainly cramp my style just now. But you don't need them for a home.... What does "home" mean, anyway, to a business or professional woman? Why, a bright, cheerful place that is her own for entertaining friends, for studying, for carrying on her hundred and one interests.

> Where do the husband and housework come in? Nowhere. A capable woman does the housework and the independent women's salary pays the bills: what could be simpler? (Patterson 58)

While the material aspect of domestic support is taken care of by a "capable woman [who] does the housework," the emotional aspect is provided, to some extent, by the communal living arrangement. The story of these four "bachelor girls" and their domestic lives does not, however, reject the more conventional and socially condoned domestic sphere of the married or family home. The article is full of references to married life. Even the decision of the four women to live together is described in terms that place it halfway between marriage and a business transaction: "'I will," [Anne] promised finally, and they solemnly shook hands" (Patterson 58). While the flat is "the core of their lives at that time" (Patterson 58), it is not constructed as something permanent: "And so four young women lived happily together – if not for ever after, at least as long as it served their need" (Patterson 59). The experience of communal living – of a woman-only domestic sphere – is figured, instead, as a preparation for marriage and family life, and co-opted back into the narrative of women's work as temporary and as ending in marriage:

> "For successful marriage – get your training in a bachelor girls' apartment," [Val] would murmur, as she straightened the disorder. She could imagine herself meeting with composure a husband's unthinking blunders. She'd smile where the unschooled bride would weep! (Patterson 59)

Echoing arguments that claimed women's public work would make them better wives and mothers, Patterson justifies working women's domestic successes with an assertion that those successes would, in fact, better fit women for marriage and the family. Despite this return, in the end, to a narrative that privileges the marital and family home over other possibilities for the domestic, Patterson's article is interesting in that it does offer a

far more optimistic vision of the independent domestic sphere for working women. The redefinition of the domestic sphere was necessary both to contain women within it and to allow women to step outside it, even if only temporarily.

The redefinition of the public sphere raises questions about the ways in which space is used to produce and maintain gendered differences and inequalities *within* the workplace, as well as between the home and the workplace. There was little doubt in the debates around women's entry into the white-collar workplace that the physical presence of women in the public space of the office changed that space – whether they were there as invaders or as pioneers. A 1905 article in *Business Magazine*, later *The Busy Man's Magazine* and *Maclean's*, writes of the ways "women who enter a profession modify the proceedings to a considerable extent" (One of Them 123). Whether it was the ideological space that changed, the "proceedings," or the literal space itself, the influence of women was assumed to be wide-reaching and powerful although opinion was, of course, divided as to whether it was a positive or negative influence. The redefinition of the space gave opponents a way to argue for the compartmentalizing of women in specific areas of paid employment and to point out, again, the threat women posed to the integrity of the public sphere. It also gave women's supporters a way to argue for an extension of the moral and civilizing influence of women from the domestic into the public sphere.

The ideological separation of the spheres was not only mirrored in the division between home and office but was also reproduced within the literal space of the public workplace. As Spain points out, professions and occupations that were open early to women were those that could reproduce the domestic space as closely as possible, thus containing women in the public sphere within a version of the domestic sphere (179).

The containment of women within a sexually segregated workplace goes some way to counteract the perceived threat posed to existing power relations by middle-class women's paid employment, and could be used to justify lower wages and poorer working conditions for women (Spain 181). Women in sexually integrated workplaces were, by the fact of their more complete participation in an integrated public workforce, exposed to new technologies and knowledges that could lead to increased status for those women (Spain 183). But it was not only a division between integrated and segregated workplaces – for example, business and teaching – that was used to reinforce the separation of ideological spheres. Within ostensibly integrated workplaces, gendered segregation was used to reproduce the separation of the spheres and to reinforce existing power relations. Spatial segregation, in terms of ideology, in terms of concrete space, and in terms of activity, is used to reproduce traditional gendered boundaries and spheres:

> Spatial segregation is one of the mechanisms by which a group with greater power can maintain its advantage over a group with lesser power. By controlling access to knowledge and resources through the control of space, the dominant group's ability to retain and reinforce its position is enhanced. Thus, spatial boundaries contribute to the unequal status of women. For women to become more knowledgeable, they must also change places. (Spain 15-16)

The ways in which both literal and figurative space is controlled and the ways in which access to the knowledge which those spaces represent is regulated are questions of power. Compartmentalizing the sexually integrated public workplace so that women are contained within versions of the domestic sphere limits women's access to the knowledge and power of the public sphere.

This compartmentalization is most clearly and concretely seen in the development of physical spaces that were reserved for women within the public workplace. An unsigned article in *Saturday Night* early in 1906 on "Lady Bank Managers" provides an

example of this kind of spatial segregation within an integrated workplace. It focuses on a bank manager in Manitoba, "Miss Naomi Farrell, manager of the women's department (savings branch) of the Northern Bank, Winnipeg" ("Lady" 12). Not only is Farrell contained within the figuratively segregated space of running the "women's department," she is also contained in the literally segregated space of the bank's "Woman's Room.... [a] reception room, furnished in excellent taste" in which women could do their banking ("Lady" 12). The article goes on to profile Mrs. E. B. Buchan, the new manager of the "women's department of the Crown Bank of Canada" ("Lady" 12). Again, her work focuses on women and is contained within a segregated space within the workplace:

> The Crown Bank was the first financial institution to recognize officially the value of women's accounts, and, with the object of making banking pleasant for women and securing their patronage, fitted up and opened a room exclusively for women. ("Lady" 12)

The Crown Bank's intent to secure women's business shows an acknowledgement of women's economic power. This power was recognized by the commercial world and influenced the textual segregation of magazines such as *Maclean's* and *Saturday Night* into main and women's sections and, ultimately, supported the development and publication of separate women's magazines such as *Chatelaine*. Attempts to aim advertising at the women who made the majority of purchasing decisions, attempts to "secur[e] their patronage," exploited the traditional separation of the spheres in ways that both reproduced that relationship and reinforced it. In the public workplace, that textual segregation is mirrored in the spatial segregation of women's concerns and activities in women's departments and women's rooms. Both "Lady Bank Managers" find their

participation in the sexually integrated public workplace both literally and figuratively contained by the gendered segregation of space.

The segregation of the spheres was not always linked so closely to the physical space of the workplace, and divisions along the lines of activity and concern reproduced those boundaries in other material ways. Just as the two "Lady Bank Managers" featured in *Saturday Night* were managers of women's departments, so the work of other women professionals and women in business was often represented as limited to dealing with other women as clients, patients, or customers. Just as women found access easier to professions that replicated the domestic sphere than to those that did not have some kind of precedent in traditional women's roles, so women were perceived as less threatening when their paid work was contained within sexually segregated limits. A *Saturday Night* article in 1917 profiles Winifred Wiseman, the manager of the Women's Department of the North American Life Insurance Company in Toronto ("Energetic" 30). Again, the containment of the woman in business within a woman's department segregates an ostensibly integrated workplace, and restricts women's activities to a circumscribed space that is both figurative and literal. The article further reinforces the compartmentalizing of women within gendered activities and concerns:

> For a good many years business women in the United States have found the selling of life insurance both a congenial and a productive occupation. They have by no means confined their activities to selling insurance to their own sex, though naturally a goodly proportion of their business would be the selling of life policies to business women in other professions. ("Energetic" 30)

Gendered boundaries between the spheres are reproduced within the public sphere using the kind of rhetoric that seeks to delimit the kind of behaviour that is "naturally" appropriate for women. At the same time as the article acknowledges that women in

insurance are not necessarily limited to working with women clients, it also reinforces the sense that it is more – perhaps, most – appropriate for women to do so. While Wiseman has difficulty maintaining the integrity of gendered boundaries within the spheres through the rhetoric of biological determinism, she uses that rhetoric to compartmentalize the public sphere and contain women's activity within a sexually segregated version of the public workplace. The separate spheres of ideology are reproduced in new ways to ensure continuing segregation along gendered lines, even when the workplace is ostensibly a sexually integrated one.

The compartmentalization of the public workplace provided a way to pre-empt, perhaps, the ways in which women might change the public workplace by their presence there. Just as the domestic sphere was necessarily redefined in response to the movement of women out of the domestic and into the public sphere, so the public sphere was redefined through the presence of women. The shift from a sexually segregated male workplace to a sexually integrated workplace meant that space had to be rewritten in ways that addressed the anxieties that integration might raise. Questions about the ways in which women might change the public space of the workplace seemed to focus on two main ideas: first, how female sexuality might change the nature of the public workplace; and second, how women might exert their moral influence in the public workplace.

One of the central questions raised by concerns about women's entrance into the public workplace arose from the idea that women might trade on their femininity to succeed. Since the professions and business were ostensibly based on a meritocratic system, any perceived threat to the idea of meritocracy was figured as a threat to the basis of professional and business life. Those who supported women's entry into paid white-

collar employment had constantly to reiterate the assertion that women who succeeded did so through their own merit and ability, and not through the exploitation of their sexuality or femininity. The notion of merit was important in arguments for opening professions and occupations to women because it could bypass questions about the moral and social implications of women's paid employment. It attempted to divert attention away from the anxieties about female sexuality that dominated discussions about women's paid employment by insisting merit provided a non-gendered and non-sexualized standard for both women and men. As Glazer and Slater point out, appeals to merit were often the only way in which women could justify precarious positions in professional situations, even as those same appeals to merit meant reward and prestige for men (243). Women could focus on merit because "it seemed so incontestable" and it seemed to offer a measure of autonomy and control outside the conventional narratives of what was acceptable or "natural" for women to do or expect: "merit and achievement were, presumably, a matter of personal control and volition, and therefore, protected from political manipulation by others" (Glazer and Slater 22). But women's experiences in the white-collar workplace often contradicted the rhetoric of meritocracy that had perhaps drawn them there in the first place and which "frequently held out false hopes to aspiring and qualified newcomers" (Glazer and Slater 77). The differences between the rewards that men could receive from a meritocratic system and the need for women to invoke that same system merely to justify their presence were very clear, and the contradiction was central to many women's experience of professional life: "Their awareness that they were unequal colleagues, included in professional settings only on the sufferance of their male superiors, conflicted with their belief in meritocracy" (Glazer and Slater 144). But this

contradiction did not prevent women from invoking an ideal of merit to defend their entry into the public workplace and to reinforce their often vulnerable positions therein. The appeal to merit in business and in the professions demanded that the public sphere move away from the impression that success – or even participation – was based on other, more personal criteria. A 1915 article by Laura Bradshaw Durand makes the probably optimistic and certainly premature comment that merit was the only criterion in hiring decisions: "no trade is now closed to a woman in Canada on the score of sex prejudice, and she is barred from no intellectual field of effort. Fitness has become the common test" (38). While strategically important in its attempt to open up, or at least appear to open up, the public sphere to women, this kind of assertion of a system based purely on merit denied the continuing practice of gendered discrimination in hiring and employment practices.

The concern with merit set women's sexuality in opposition to women's ability, and it became necessary to defend women's successes in terms of that opposition. Profiles of successful women in business or the professions frequently asserted, often by quoting the women themselves, that the women in question had succeeded by merit alone and not through the exploitation, deliberate or not, of their gender or sexuality. Madge Macbeth's article in the December 1914 issue of *Maclean's* defines the successful woman in business in exactly those terms: "she is one who does not rely upon the personal equation, upon her feminine attractiveness to win, where plainer women would fail; she is one who counts *merit* highest, and in turn is counted high" (25). This explicit invocation of merit, with its accompanying rejection of the "personal equation," places the emphasis firmly on women's abilities, and dismisses the exploitation of the personal

in the public sphere. Macbeth goes on to quote Mary Grant, the first woman treasurer and clerk in Ontario, on the nature of her own success: "'What a man could do, I do," she says. 'I want it never to be thought that I must have any privileges that would not be accorded to a man if he held the position'" (105). Grant's comments highlight the accusation that women in the public sphere would not abide by its rules but would rather use specifically feminine traits, namely sexuality and sexual attractiveness, to succeed where a man or a "plainer woman" might not. Durand's article profiles the "only woman teamster in Toronto – mayhap in Canada" (38) and makes a similar point:

> "I would advise no *weakling woman* to enter the business world in any capacity as an independent factor," she replied, with the first touch of passion in her voice.
>
> "I never trade on the fact of my sex. I ask only for the same consideration shown a man." (39)

The righteous indignation of women who are succeeding in their chosen fields that they have succeeded through merit and not through exploiting their gender points to how important it was for women to reiterate the meritocratic system – even as their lived experience surely contradicted it and the accompanying claims of merit rewarded and "fitness [as] the common test" (Durand 38). The contradiction of a neutral meritocracy and a discriminatory public workplace was masked by constant assertions of the importance of merit, as was the ideological struggle implicit in that contradiction.

The perceived threat posed by the presence of female sexuality in the public workplace was taken very seriously by those who attempted to maintain the integrity of the boundaries of an exclusively male public sphere. Those who were more supportive of women's paid employment had, then, to address that perceived threat and could not help but acknowledge it in their own discussions of women's place in the public space of the office. A 1910 article in *Saturday Night* on Mabelle French, a lawyer, opens with the

comment that this "Portia, judging from her photographs, is certainly winsome enough to melt the average jury" (Leslie 29). The implication that French would trade on the fact of her physical attractiveness in the courtroom perpetuates the kind of anxieties about the changes women's presence would bring to the public sphere: even within the justice system, women could trade on their femininity to exert undue influence on those men with whom they came into contact – in this case, twelve men at once. A few months later, *Saturday Night* carried a short piece on the newly elected women representatives in the Finn legislature, the Diet. Again, the question of women trading on the fact of their sexuality is brought to the fore: the "Finnish correspondent of a London paper" comments that the "comic paper vision of the flirting lady member vanishes in face of the actual spectacle of women who outdo the gravest males in correctitude of demeanour" ("Women Legislators" 27). That women can succeed – can, in fact, "outdo" their male colleagues – again reaffirms the primacy of neutral merit over gendered characteristics.

Yet there is always a clear understanding that there are women in business and the professions who do trade on their sexuality, whether intentionally or not. As Newell's 1908 article makes clear, women who choose to trade on their sexuality and the fact of their gender do succeed – but they succeed in ways that take them out of the public sphere and reinstall them within the confines of the domestic sphere and the natural order. Newell's "'thoroughly feminine' woman in business" embodies the perceived threat of women's sexuality in the public workplace:

> Often she makes a cometlike success, through the combination of pretty dress, pretty manners, and a seasoning of professional information which, by wiles too deep for average penetration, she employs with deadly results in conquest. How the staid dictums of Cooley on 'Torts' or of Butler on 'Diagnostics' could be added to a woman's armory of coquetry is as unfathomable a riddle as woman herself. (98)

The success of women who trade on their sexuality in the public workplace is, in professional terms, only temporary. The use of professional knowledge in personal relationships to secure a husband blurs the boundaries between the public and the private and destabilizes the integrity of the public sphere in the minds of those who would seek to preserve it as a space segregated along gendered lines. This integration of public and private is threatening when it takes place within the public sphere but, as Newell goes on to stress, it is more acceptable when that integration leads to the containment of women within the domestic sphere: the "'thoroughly feminine woman' in business" is "swallow[ed] up" by a marriage that effectively removes her from the public sphere (98). An earlier article in *The Busy Man's Magazine* had set up a model for this recontainment of women in the domestic with an integration of business and personal that removed women from the paid labour force but continued to exploit the skills they had learned there. An article that explores the marriage prospects for working women recounts the story of a stenographer who married her employer:

> Only the other day I was talking with a gentleman who had married a girl formerly employed by the house for whom he did business. I asked him how things were going, and he spoke in the most glowing terms of the girl whom he had made his wife. "Why," he concluded, "I used to have to work night after night at my books, sometimes until midnight, before I was married, but now, after baby is in bed, Minnie gets to work with me and we finish by 10 o'clock. I tell you it's great to have a business woman for a wife!" ("Nurses" 76)

The integration of public and private is contained within the domestic sphere and is also subordinated to domestic and maternal concerns. The wife of this "gentleman" is primarily a mother: she must first get the baby to bed before she can "get to work" for her husband. But her commercial background means that the ways in which she can help him with his work and support his career change, and even while contained within the

domestic sphere she can take on responsibilities associated with the public sphere. She is both "business girl" and "wife," integrating public and private, professional and domestic, within the confines of the home. "Minnie" is, in some ways, what *The Business Woman* would later refer to as "the two-job woman" with one important, albeit tacit, distinction: the "two-job woman" was at least paid for one of her two jobs, whereas Minnie is paid for neither. Her unpaid labour as stenographer and as wife and mother support her husband's career, providing in a doubled way the kind of support identified by Kinnear as central to men's professional and business success. The domestic space is changed by the fact of the wife's business career, even as the containment of women in the domestic is reaffirmed. The boundaries between public and private are blurred at the same time as they are reproduced.

When the boundaries are blurred within the public sphere rather than within the domestic, the perceived threat of women's sexuality is less easily ignored or rewritten. The destabilizing effect of the introduction of female sexuality into the public workplace provoked moral anxieties about the nature and potential problems of a sexually integrated public space. A short article in *Saturday Night* on the attempt by "Mrs. Langstaff" to gain admission to the Quebec Bar highlights some of the extremes of this anxiety and the intensity of some of the opposition to women's paid employment. The Quebec judge Mr. Justice St. Pierre is quoted as turning down Langstaff's appeal on grounds that focus on the moral threat women would pose in professional life: "I hold that to admit a woman … and more particularly a married woman, as a barrister … would be nothing short of a direct infringement of public order and a manifest violation of the law of good morals and public decency" ("Front" 1). Summoning up stereotypes of both women (as innately

moral) and lawyers (as not), the article questions St. Pierre's ruling and argues that while "the possession of morals might affect Mrs. Langstaff's proficiency as a lawyer," she should be allowed to bring those same morals into the public sphere for the good of the profession of which she would be a part ("Front" 1). St. Pierre's ruling, as well as much of the debate around the moral and social affects of women's entrance into the public workplace, is grounded in a contradiction: that women are innately moral, but that they bring with them some kind of moral threat and disorder. That contradiction is central to the discussion but is never adequately resolved. As Spain points out, the sexually integrated workplace provoked anxieties that, in practice, overlooked the very real economic changes that women might bring with them and focused instead on the perceived moral threat:

> When women entered the public (i.e. male) sphere, they ran the risk of being stigmatized as morally suspect.... The sexual integration of the workplace was clearly perceived as a threat when it first occurred, but the threat was defined on moral grounds rather than on the economic grounds which seem, in retrospect, to be the more realistic fear. (196)

The economic questions that women's paid labour raised were subsumed in a narrative of morality and the threatening nature of women's sexuality when removed from its appropriate domestic setting. Agnes C. Laut, in her 1918 article "Strange New Change in Woman's World," refers to the question of equal wages for women and men as "the red hot end of a very hot poker" (42) but questions about the economic implications of women's paid white-collar labour did not receive the attention that they most definitely deserved. Instead, the focus remained on the ways in which women's sexuality would pose a moral threat to both the integrity and the constitution of the public workplace.

Those who wished to defend women's participation in paid employment had to address the perceived threat posed by women's sexuality. Responses to allegations of women's immoral influence on, and behaviour in, the public workplace often resorted to the assertion of women's innate morality. But even this was not immune to question and critique. A 1908 article in *The Busy Man's Magazine* acknowledges the idea that women might have some kind of refining influence on the public sphere but immediately undercuts that influence by resorting to another, contradictory stereotype about women and their behaviour:

> Some approve her pluck and energy in accomplishing work that, they believe, she was never intended to do at all. Others explain that she brings the refining influence of the home into the savage jungle of business life. Likewise, she is supposed to bring a sense of order. It isn't so certain that Woman possesses a sense of order, even at home. There is the damaging evidence of her bureau drawer. There is the divine disorder she brings to male existence. But in business she is widely assumed to be a neat commercial housekeeper for heedless Man. (Collins 42)

Women are supposed to bring to bear on the public sphere those civilizing influences that had hitherto been reserved for private life. But, this "refining influence," with its analogy to the missionary work of the colonial project, is reduced to women moving private housekeeping skills out into the public sphere. The "damaging evidence" of women's inability to keep even the domestic in order is translated into proof of the false pretences under which women were demanding entrance to the public workplace.

Another common defence against accusations of women's immoral influence in the workplace is the argument that while some women might behave inappropriately, most women would not. A 1912 article by L. C. Webber in *Saturday Night* points to the injustice of assuming that all women in the public workplace would behave in the same questionable ways:

> Because of one stenographer in a thousand meeting the advances of a married man, and because of these rare instance being made the subject of public slander and ridicule, women of this occupation have in years past suffered a stigma which will take many years of dignified conduct to efface. (Webber 31)

The emphasis is on women's "dignified conduct," their morality; the "rare instance[s]" of women behaving immorally are dismissed as infrequent yet acknowledged as damaging. The following year, an article reprinted from the *Ottawa Journal* describes a petition sent by working women in Montreal to the movie industry, asking the industry to amend its portrayal of women in business so as not to rely on stereotypes of immoral or inappropriate behaviour:

> Three thousand office girls in Montreal will send a petition to the manufacturers of moving picture films protesting against having their class constantly depicted as flirting, making love and eloping. Such widespread defensive interest in what may appear in itself to be a trifling matter, nevertheless shows a commendable spirit of self-respect on the part of the young ladies.
>
> The stenographer and the female clerk are two much-maligned individuals. Their class is subjected to altogether too much innuendo in popular humourous publications. Through the influence of suggestion, this undoubtedly leads to more trouble for the respectable working girl than she would ordinarily meet with. ("Women in the Business World" 30)

The characterization of women in business as constantly "flirting, making love and eloping" is so prevalent in arguments against women's full participation in the public workplace that the Montreal women's petition does represent an interesting engagement with a dominant discourse that evidently did not consider it a "trifling matter." The construction of women as trading on their sexuality in the public workplace and as behaving inappropriately reinscribes the entrance of women into the public space of the office as a dangerous blurring of the boundaries between the separate spheres of ideology. The *Saturday Night* article itself acknowledges the power of the media in the reproduction of images of working women. The "moving picture films" and "popular

humourous publications" that both construct and validate the threat of women's sexuality in the workplace reproduce anxieties about women's behaviour that have material effects on the lives of the women they represent. Women in the workplace are, the article argues, the target of "more trouble" than they would have been – the implication being that the sexual harassment of women is legitimated by these popular images of women.

Emphasizing the ways in which men's behaviour might change with the presence of women in the integrated workplace shifts the responsibility for changes in the public sphere onto the men who already occupied it and off the women who are entering it. The 1912 article in *Saturday Night* I quoted earlier points out the ways in which many women were subject to the "insidious attentions of the male flirt" in the workplace (Webber 31). The article draws attention to the fact that sexual harassment was to some extent legitimized through the reproduction of the idea that women who entered the public sphere were "morally suspect" (Spain 196). The moral threat in the workplace is reversed: it is men in the office who are behaving inappropriately, and women are repositioned as objects rather than agents in the destabilizing of the moral order of the public sphere. The rewriting of men's behaviour in the public workplace also entails pointing out the hypocrisy of allegations about women's behaviour. While women were accused of various kinds of gendered behaviours, men's behaviour was generally exempt from scrutiny. Another 1912 article in *Saturday Night*, signed by "A business girl," is an exception to this because it attempts to counteract accusations about women through comparisons with men's behaviour. The article acknowledges that women sometimes do

live up to stereotypes of female behaviour, but it also points out that men are not immune from the kind of faults for which women are so easily condemned:

> "Girls are flippant and gossipy and apt to discuss the latest fashions and last night's party or theatre." Very true in a number of cases. But did you ever hear men hold forth on politics in office hours or discuss the latest ball games or bet in the coming races? Why pick out the most frivolous and least responsible girl and class all others with her? We do not wish to appear bitter on the subject, but comparisons have become much too one-sided to the detriment of the business girl. (A business girl 29)

This represents another appeal to the reader not simply to assume that all business women fit the stereotype of frivolity and immorality. By exposing the hypocrisy of allegations about women's behaviour that ignore the similar failings in men's behaviour, the article also exposes the fragility of the opposition to women's presence in the public workplace on those grounds.

At the same time, the responsibility for policing sexuality and sexual behaviour in the public workplace was placed firmly on women. Women were characterized as "morally suspect" (Spain 196); yet, they were expected to control and contain their behaviour and to legislate not only their own sexual behaviour but men's as well. While women's beauty was highly valued, in the public as it was in the private sphere, it was also characterized as something that might attract undesirable attention from male colleagues or superiors. A 1922 article by Gertrude E. S. Pringle in *Maclean's* provides the following cautionary tale:

> A girl may smile her way into popularity, but it is hard work that tells in the long run. Indeed it is open to question whether beauty helps in business. One keen wholesaler found a beautiful stenographer was an absolute hinderance in his business. One day he sent for her and said, "My dear young lady, I regret very much that I must dispense with your services. Your work is well done, you are exemplary in every way, but you are much too attractive and all my young men are buzzing around you. When I want any of them, I have to go to your desk to

> find them, for Harry will be picking up your handkerchief, Tom sharpening your pencils and Dick making a date with you for the theatre." (Pringle 1922: 61)

Male sexuality is constructed as beyond legislation – there is no penalty for Tom, Dick, and Harry who spend their time at the desk of the beautiful but unfortunate stenographer – and female beauty is constructed as a liability to the business enterprise. While this woman is "exemplary in every way" in her work, the standards by which she is ultimately judged are not those of the public sphere but of the private. The sexual integration of public and private, here represented by the attentions of three men to one of their women colleagues, is ultimately unsuccessful in that it threatens the business enterprise because women's sexual attractiveness distracts men away from their commercial concerns. This question of distraction again places the responsibility on women to legislate not only their behaviour but also their appearance. Even when that appearance receives the approval of those with whom the working women would come into contact, it is still weighed against their business or professional abilities. A 1910 article by "Madame" on women police officers comments that "from the standpoint of picturesqueness, the 'policewoman' is something devoutly to be wished for. And after all if she looks well it won't matter much about her usefulness" (Madame 17). Women's merit is secondary to their "picturesqueness" and their ability to "[look] well." Advice for working women often emphasizes the importance of not drawing attention to one's femininity. An unsigned 1917 article in *Maclean's* offers the following advice from an American business woman: "Miss Carr puts 'dress well and sensibly' among the first of her injunctions to those who seek her advice. The girl in business must be careful not to wear clothes that distract attention" ("Business Girls" 68). As Glazer and Slater point out, white-collar women struggled with the contradictory pressures that "judged femininity a distraction to

professional work" (87) but that rejected the woman who appeared "mannish" (87); Newell's figure of the "desexed" woman embodies that opposite extreme and receives the disapproval of all who encounter her (99). Women were pressured to "attempt the impossible task of not being enough of either sex to be noticed," and to minimize difference to the point that they could merge with male colleagues while retaining enough that was distinctly feminine to avoid censure (Glazer and Slater 87, 88). A woman must not only refuse to trade on her sexuality or her gender, but guard against even drawing attention to her gender. Admission to the public sphere was, for women, contingent on the maintenance of a delicate balance between being distracting and being desexed.

Questions of the occupation of both metaphorical and literal space, and the accompanying questions of ideology, bring forth difficult and contradictory responses in the debates in Canadian magazines of the early twentieth century. The gendered nature of space was reproduced in both the arguments that opposed and those that supported women's entrance into a public workplace. The production and maintenance of gendered differences between the home and the workplace and within the workplace reproduced gendered relations of power that continued to equate men with public action and women with domestic containment. While both private and public required redefinition in response to changing historical circumstances and the increasing presence of women in the public workplace, those redefinitions frequently drew on conventional narratives of women's domestic roles and men's public roles. The ideological separation of the spheres continued to have material effects on the lives of women and men or, as Wolff puts it, to "set the terms of existence" ("Culture" 25), and the spatial arrangements of the

workplace, as much as the metaphors used to explain them, both reinforced and challenged the existing relations of power.

Chapter Three

"Will the Women Go Back?"

The public workplace in Canada underwent enormous changes during the First World War. As Alison Prentice *et al* point out, changes in every aspect of society rendered the postwar nation a very different place: "World War I … was a turning point for Canada as a nation. The Canada of 1919 was profoundly different from the Canada of 1914 in several fundamental aspects – demographic, economic, political, and social" (213). The transformation of Canada into a "full-blown industrial society" (Prentice *et al* 107) meant significant changes in the nature of the workplace, and women played an active and public role in aspects of those changes. Women's increasingly public participation in paid employment as part of the war effort effectively speeded up the "invasion" of the public sphere that was already underway. In the years leading up to the war, Canadian women had dramatically increased their numbers in business and professional occupations. This increase and the occupational shift it represented meant that "by World War I, there were more women holding down white-collar jobs than were engaged in manufacturing" (Prentice *et al* 113). While the early years of the war seem to have seen little increase in the demand for women's paid labour, increases in war-related production beginning in 1916 and the implementation of conscription in 1917 led to an increase in women's participation in the paid labour force (Ramkhalawansingh 271-2). The extent and form of this participation seems open to debate, and Joan Sangster, in her

1985 essay on working women, casts doubt on the idea that women were entering all areas of the wartime workforce in numbers worthy of comment:

> contrary to popular assumption, with the significant exception of munitions, large numbers of women did not move into the work force during the war, certainly not into 'men's' jobs, only to be squeezed out later by returning soldiers. (67)

Even with that in mind, women's paid labour certainly seems to have been sanctioned during the war years in ways it had not been before as part of an attempt to "protect the country's stability and future vitality" (Prentice *et al* 110). Paid work became a matter of nationalism and of responsible citizenship, with the granting of federal suffrage helping to cement women's position as full citizens.

The war years saw the granting of suffrage to women at both federal and provincial levels which changed the role and status of women within the public life of the nation. Carol Bacchi points out in her book *Liberation Deferred* that the majority of the women involved in leading the suffrage movement were women who also worked outside the home:

> Almost 60 per cent of the female suffrage leaders were employed outside the home, a rather remarkable statistic given that in 1911 only 14.3 per cent of the total female population over age ten were gainfully employed. In the main these women were professionals -- journalists, doctors, educators, with a sprinkling of lawyers and businesswomen. (4)

These links between professional and business life and the politics of the suffrage movement in Canada seem to suggest that suffrage would emerge as one of the central strands in the debate around women's white-collar work in the early twentieth century. However, the debate in *Maclean's* and *Saturday Night* tended to remain firmly focused on women in the public workplace and not on women in the public sphere more broadly. While there are articles in both magazines on women in paid employment during the war

and postwar years, there are barely any that deal directly with the question of women's suffrage. Some of the questions raised about women in the public workplace gesture, often rather obliquely, to the granting of voting rights to women, usually in terms of increased participation in the life of the nation, but they do not address the question of suffrage in detail. Women's public lives are constructed, for the most part, as working lives and not political ones.

The events of the war were important in terms of public attitudes to women's paid employment. Calls to organize women's labour or to legislate protection for women workers suggest a widespread acknowledgment of women as an established presence in the public workplace. Ceta Ramkhalawansingh argues that this new acknowledgment of women's labour as something more than merely temporary or exceptional was prompted by wartime conditions and in turn led to various attempts to control and regulate women workers (287). While these attempts at regulation and control through legislation may have been well-intentioned, their effects were sometime less positive and "legislated protection became a basis for discrimination against women" (Ramkhalawansingh 297). Attempts during the war to introduce equal pay for equal work legislation failed (Ramkhalawansingh 279), and trades unions and other organizations and individuals – including the chair of the National Service Board – often opposed the widespread use of women's labour (Sangster 68). Louisa Watson Peat writes defiantly in 1917 of the attitudes of trades unions to questions of equal pay:

> Trades unions which had whined to a government of men's representatives, hugging their little, measly scrap of paper – "women only to be employed for the duration of the war" – Afraid of us? Good. Then equal pay to recompense men's work done by women for men's sake. (Peat *Mrs.* 188)

Questions of equal pay for equal work were more easily asked when women stepped directly into jobs vacated by men and were left to be effectively the sole income earners in families as their husbands were fighting in Europe. Soldiers were paid, but as Louisa Watson Peat points out, "no woman could keep her house on the separation allowance of a private soldier" (*Mrs*. 141). The idea that women were not working out of any selfish desires but rather to support and encourage the nation's men could then be used to justify and explain the need for women to enter the public workplace in such numbers. While questions of equal pay remained, for the most part, unanswered, concern about their implications led to a great deal of speculation about the transition from a war-time to a peace-time economy once the war was over. While women's labour was important to support the war effort, the question of how it would fit into the Canadian economy once the soldiers had returned to take up the jobs they left dominated discussions of women's paid employment during the war.

The events and experiences of the First World War forged, at least in terms of a changing national mythology, a new role on the world stage for Canada. Writing from the war years, and the years that immediately followed, includes many references to the ways in which the events of the war and Canada's participation in them – especially in the major campaigns at, for example, Vimy Ridge – are seen as markers of national growth and maturation. As early as April 1916, Agnes C. Laut was speculating about the ways in which the war would change Canada, and suggesting that the war would bring Canada into a new phase of its development as a nation: "Am I wrong in thinking Canada is entering a new era in her history; that the flash-buster boom was only the sputter of adolescence, while the war marks Canada's birthday to full nationhood?" ("New" 86).

Soon after the war, a history of Canada written for use in Ontario's public schools describes the "Great War" as the point at which Canada emerged as a nation in its own right: "The war left Canada no longer a colony but a British nation, which had fought side by side with the other nations within the British Commonwealth" (Wrong 353). The war is represented as being a catalyst for the "coming of age" of Canada, and many of the articles in *Maclean's* and *Saturday Night* during the war speculate on the war's implications for Canada, and on the role Canada will play in the British empire and in the world once the war is over. The same applies, to a large extent, to the articles that deal with women's paid labour during the war years and immediately afterward. There is less focus on the lived experiences of women in paid employment, and more on how women's wartime experiences will change their lives and the life of the nation once the war is over.

Up until approximately 1917, articles about the war in *Maclean's* tend to be reprinted from other publications; there are very few original articles. The magazine, however, still presented itself as an unrivaled source for coverage of the war. A short editorial in December 1914 holds up the digest section "Review of Reviews"[1] as the reason for that breadth:

> The war is the main topic of discussion in the press of the world. In the magazines and periodicals of all countries articles are appearing on the causes of the war, the course of hostilities and the probable results. The best of these articles are selected and condensed for our Review of Reviews Department, thereby giving to readers of MacLean's [sic] Magazine an unequalled opportunity to read the best war literature. The January number will contain nearly a dozen

[1] The digest format of the *Busy Man's Magazine* had, by that point, contracted into a shorter section in *Maclean's* titled the "Review of Reviews" in which articles from magazines, newspapers, and periodicals from Britain and the United States were summarized or reproduced. *Maclean's* also included original articles and fiction from Canadian, British, and American writers.

> article giving views and information on the war, which could be obtained from no other single source. ("The January Number" 3)

Maclean's self-conscious assertion of its role as a reliable source of information on the war sets the magazine up as a Canadian voice on the conflict, but one that reflects international trends and opinions. This balance between reprints and original articles shifts a little once John Bayne Maclean begins publishing his own, sometimes controversial articles on the conflict and once Agnes C. Laut begins to write her regular articles on the economic impact of the war and on the situation in the United States. Coverage of women's paid work was often, in the early years of the war, restricted to the "Review of Reviews" department. It was only after the advent of the *Maclean's* women's department, "Women and their Work," in the August 1917 issue that original articles discussing women's paid, public work in relation to the war began to appear more frequently. While articles on women's unpaid domestic labour tended to dominate the early months of "Women and their Work," the department did provide a forum in which questions about women could be specifically addressed. While the department did contain debates about women within a textual equivalent of the separate spheres of ideology, it also brought those same questions into a predominantly male publication. As early as 1909 *Saturday Night* had divided its contents into the main section, the financial section, and the "Women's Section," and its limited coverage of women's paid work during the war years appears, for the most part, in the women's section. There are very few articles on women's paid work during the war in *Saturday Night*, however – even in the women's section. After the war, questions of women's paid labour are taken up again as part of the rhetoric of reconstruction, but there is very little coverage or discussion during the war itself.

Agnes C. Laut's article "Strange New Change in Women's World" is one of the first original articles in *Maclean's* to deal with women's paid wartime employment. By the time her first article about the war appeared in *Maclean's* in the September 1915 issue, Laut was already an established historian and author. After working as an editorial writer for the *Manitoba Free Press* between 1895 and 1897, she spent two years as a freelance journalist writing for various British, American, and Canadian publications, including assignments for *Saturday Night* (Gerson 182). She published her first novel in 1900, and went on to publish numerous historical works for both children and adults. Her output was prolific: she produced "scores of magazine articles which formed the basis for more than a dozen books" (Gerson 182). In 1901, Laut moved to the United States and continued to write for Canadian publications and on Canadian topics even though she spent the rest of her life living in upstate New York. A 1916 editorial in *Maclean's* describes Laut as having "won a place among the leading lady journalists of the world, as her work with 'Saturday Evening Post,' 'World's Work,' 'Review of Reviews,' etc., attests" ("Makers" 96). From 1916 onwards, there is an article on the war by Laut in almost every issue of *Maclean's* and, as the war goes on, her article is often the lead in each issue. The fact that she is living in the United States necessarily influences her writing, and the majority of the articles offer a perspective on the war that takes the situation in the United States into account.

Laut's article "Strange New Change in Woman's World" is unusual partly because it deals with the question of women's labour but does not appear in *Maclean's* new women's department – even though in the same issue, the women's department contains

an article by Peat addressing similar questions. After "Women and their Work" became a regular department in *Maclean's*, articles that deal explicitly with women's issues (in the broadest sense) were generally contained within that section. Laut's article appears in the main body of the magazine, as do her other articles on the war. It is also unusual in that Laut focuses, for the most part, on the economic implications of women's paid labour during the war and how those might play out in Canada once the war is over. Other articles on women's paid work tend, in general, to address more closely the perceived social and moral implications while leaving political or economic questions untouched. Laut analyzes and discusses the changes that have already taken place for women in the economy and speculates on how postwar Canada will deal with these newly independent women who are now used to making their own money and taking their own place in the public sphere. She presents two distinct but related questions: what is the effect of war work on women, and how is the war changing the ways in which women, particularly working women, are perceived?

Laut writes positively about the effects of work on individual women. She argues that working women become stronger, less prone to nervous conditions, more willing and able to take on responsibility, and less self-centered (Laut "Strange" 42). While paid labour does, she acknowledges, sometimes exact a toll on women's bodies, the benefits generally outweigh the concerns:

> What is the reaction on the individual woman? Facts answer good. Some may overstrain; but overstrain in a good cause is not so destructive to character as rotting from idleness, or the blue fungus of social envy and discontent. (Laut "Strange" 42)

The implicit idea that women are somehow ennobled by work in ways that are far superior to the rewards (or perils) of a life focused around "idleness" and "social envy"

echoes other arguments about the importance of young women making themselves useful during the war. While women's participation is a benefit to a nation at war, it is also beneficial to the individual women who undertake it. But within standard narratives of women's lives – the narrative of progression through work to marriage and motherhood – it is not enough merely to consider the effects on women as individuals. Women are always constructed as wives and mothers, or at least as potential wives and mothers. Laut extends the positive effects of work on women as individuals to their families, or the families that they may have in the future:

> What is the reaction going to be on the home? Facts have already answered that, too. Steadier nerves, fewer 'jumps,' stronger bodies for motherhood, a new sense of responsibility, little souls redeemed by consecration to service instead of self. ("Strange" 42)

Any consideration of woman as an individual cannot take place without the simultaneous consideration of woman as the embodiment of family. While justifying women's participation in the public sphere through employment in the war effort, Laut is also reinforcing a domestic narrative that privileges motherhood and the care of "little souls" above all other occupations for women. Like others, Laut argues that strong and fulfilled women make good mothers, and that a better understanding of the public sphere leads to a broader understanding of the responsibilities of motherhood. This assertion that public work will ameliorate women's performance of the domestic work of raising children is a common strategy in texts that seek to support women's participation in the paid labour force.

Moving beyond questions of the individual and the family, Laut considers the ways in which the increased participation of women in the paid labour force is changing the public workplace. She argues that women's paid work is being viewed in a more

positive light, framed as it is within the national war effort. The war, she argues, has changed forever the way in which society views women's paid employment:

> Too often, work outside the home with a woman has been a temporary makeshift, at a makeshift lower wage.... First society did not sanction her working after she was married; so work was a fill-in for a girl till she chose a mate. Second, even if she chose to continue a life work after marriage, there was next to no possibility of working up to an executive position, of earning, say, a partnership...; but now with man power called to the firing line, these partnership are now being offered to her as she earns them. (Laut "Strange" 42)

Attitudes to women's paid employment which deem it merely temporary and which refuse to offer women equal pay, opportunities, and rewards are relegated to the pre-war years. Women coming in to replace the "man power [that is] called to the firing line" has changed both the ways in which women are perceived in the paid workforce, and the ways in which women experience the paid workforce. The idea of meritocracy is invoked in similar ways to those discussed in Chapter Two – only here it is presented as a function of the wartime economy. Women not only have more positions open to them and face fewer social pressures, they are rewarded more fairly when they have proved themselves worthy of increases in pay and responsibility. Despite her earlier reinforcement of the domestic narrative for women, Laut also subverts the more conventional stance that women's participation in paid work was temporary and reflected a lack of commitment on their part. She points to society's refusal to sanction married women in the public workplace as the reason why work is a "fill-in for a girl till she choose[s] a mate," and puts the responsibility for this on society rather than on the women themselves.

Laut also discusses some of the broader potential economic implications of these new attitudes towards women in the paid labour force. As women take up occupations

previously closed to them and perform perfectly well within them, gendered wage differentials become increasingly difficult to justify – except in ways that resort to moral arguments and erroneous assumptions about women's role within the family economy. Laut questions the effect that women's participation in waged labour will have on wages for both men and women:

> What is the reaction going to be on the economic world? Wages for instance? Women's wages have automatically gone to the same level as men's wages for the same work; and that is the red hot end of a very hot poker. (Laut 42)

While Laut asserts that women's wages have "automatically" been set at the same level as the men alongside whom they work or whom they have replaced for the duration, the fact of equal pay for equal work is still being disputed in Canada and elsewhere. Her assertion of equal pay for equal work does, however, serve an important rhetorical purpose. Laut bypasses conventional arguments and concerns about the idea of the family wage – even with the qualifier that equal pay is the "red hot end of a very hot poker." The family wage was a source of considerable discussion in the early twentieth century, despite the fact that it remained more or less a fiction – albeit one that was invoked to justify and enforce gendered wage differentials, and to undercut demands for equal pay for equal work. Rather than degrading male workers, Laut argues that equal pay for equal work will improve the standard of women's labour: "it seems to me, it is going to lay on woman a new sense of obligation as to work, a new demand as to equal efficiency" (Laut "Strange" 42). In most discussions, attention focuses on the *equal pay* side of the equation. Laut chooses, instead, to focus on the *equal work* side: she emphasizes the benefits to industry and to the broader economy that women's work –

raised to the level of men's by the equality of their wages – will bring. An article by Louisa W. Peat in the same issue makes a similar argument:

> Woman is now man's partner.... Equal pay -- equal work. The new slogan of women. Equal work as far as physical strength and endurance can carry it.
>
> We got our training. We got our pay. We are giving our work -- of the best, equal work. ("Will the Women" 110)

Peat cites women's involvement in paid labour during the war as proof of women's ability to work equally alongside men and in jobs previously considered closed to them. Like Laut, she argues that improvements in women's incomes and in pay equity should not be lost once the war is over:

> Yes; women's opportunity came under causes of dire calamity, but it came. Women have shown, given equal chance, that they are equal to the occasion" -- the gains should not be ignored or reversed once the war is over (Peat "Will the Women" 111).

Both Peat and Laut address the economic questions raised by women's war work. Laut's focus on the economic implications of women's paid work rather than on the moral implications is not surprising given the focus of her other articles which deal in detail with the economic conditions in the United States and Canada, the effect of the war on both countries, and the relationship between them. In the article, Laut chooses not to engage with many of the more commonly cited objections, concerns, and assumptions about women in the paid labour force; instead, she focuses her attention on questions of economics. This, perhaps, helps explain why her article is not contained within the women's department: Laut does deal with "Women and their Work" but she does so outside the conventional parameters of the debate.

Other articles on women's wartime work stick more closely to conventional ways of discussing women's labour, but also take up questions of national responsibility. Ethel

M. Chapman, editor of "Women and their Work," exploits national sentiment to further justify women's wartime paid labour. She ends an article in the September 1918 issue of *Maclean's* by constructing women's patriotic responsibilities in very familiar terms:

> To keep our country free, our children fearless,
> Our women clean, men face the hell of war.
> Arm them with memories pure to courage peerless,
> Give them a womanhood worth fighting for! (Chapman "Your Girl" 113)

While this can be read as a conventional equation of woman and nation, the context constructs the responsibility of producing a womanhood worthy of sacrifice as, in part at least, participation in the paid labour that will maintain the nation's economy throughout the war years. By working to keep the Canadian economy going while Canadian men are fighting in the trenches, however, they are helping to construct the very reason why those men should be fighting at all. Women's paid labour finds its justification – outside questions of morality, merit, fairness, or separate spheres – in the collective effort to win the war and to build a nation that will be strong and free in the coming decades. The work that women were doing as part of the war effort is important not only in economic terms, in the maintenance of businesses and professions while the men are away, but in constructing a nation that would inspire Canadian troops in Europe and give them a reason for fighting that was intimately linked to their homes and families, rather than simply to abstract ideas of justice, honour, and right.

The invocation of patriotism was, as Chapman's article suggests, important to discussions of women's wartime paid labour. In the first half of the war, articles on women's work in *Maclean's* tend to be clustered in the "Review of Reviews" department, and are reprinted from British or American publications. Some original articles do also

refer, however, to the ways in which women from other nations are participating in both paid and voluntary work to support the war. Part of the attempt to encourage Canadian women to participate in the war effort, perhaps, was the invocation of the strength and patriotism of women from other countries and their willingness to do whatever was necessary – even military service – to support the war. The focus is generally on women's war work in Britain, and on the ways in which British society was adjusting to a more public role for women. It is interesting, then, that the first article to deal explicitly with a wartime role for women in the labour market focuses on neither a British nor a Canadian context. A 1915 article by Princess Sasha Kropotkin, reprinted from the *Ladies' Realm* magazine, outlines the efforts of "The Women of Russia" (71) and only briefly addresses circumstances in Russia in relation to those in England. Kropotkin presents Russia as a place that does not experience the gendered division of labour to the same extent as England and elsewhere. She situates Russian women's wartime efforts as part of a larger culture that allows and supports women's work outside the home:

> During war more than at any other time the general efficiency of the women plays an important part in the success of their country. This is especially so where there is conscription, for it is inevitable that life should become dislocated when all or most of the men are withdrawn from it. In Russia women fill so many posts which in other countries are the privilege of men, that they are still there to carry on the work when the men are gone – and in any case they are willing to take up a variety of occupations from which they are barred in ordinary times. (Kropotkin 71)

She characterizes Russian women as strong, resourceful, and determined to "Minimize the Ravaging Effects of the War" (Kropotkin 71). The war effort and the increased need for Russian women's participation in the public labour force is not as pronounced, according to Kropotkin, because women there are already so much more integrated and

established in the public workplace. The "general efficiency of women" (Kropotkin 71) is important in the peacetime economy but becomes even more so in times of war. It is only at the very end of her article that Kropotkin addresses the situation in England:

> It is greatly to be regretted that at such a time as the present English women are not more freely admitted to work which under ordinary circumstances is discharged by men. They would most undoubtedly acquit themselves creditably, and prove their powers of adaptability not less than their Russian sisters. (71)

In an appeal to the idea of an international sisterhood of women united in the war effort, Kropotkin does not lay the responsibility for the situation in England on the women themselves. Instead, she blames a society that remains reluctant to sanction women's paid labour and to take advantage of the strength and potential of women workers. Her article is perhaps meant to inspire British women – and British employers – to explore the potential of women's paid labour as part of the war effort, and the decision by the editors to reprint it in *Maclean's* suggests that the message was also considered an appropriate one for Canadian women.

As the war continued, changing economic conditions and mounting demands for war-related production increased women's participation in paid labour, and later articles hold up British working women as examples of patriotism and commitment. Just over a year after the publication of Kropotkin's article, B. D. Thornley uses the example of the British Women's Emergency Corps and of the women who were filling newly-vacated jobs in Britain as part of the war effort to bolster support for the work of the newly-founded Canadian Women's Emergency Corps:

> That some at least of these [Canadian] volunteers will be needed seems indisputable when one considers the women postmen, elevator men, tramcar conductors and taxi drivers that stream to work through every English dawn, to say nothing of the record of the munitions plants where there are three women to

> every man – and the British Emergency Corps crying that the lead must be raised to six! (77)

The importance and effectiveness of the Canadian Women's Emergency Corps is confirmed by the example of the British women who have already organized in the same way and who are already working in jobs previously undertaken by men. The willingness of women in Britain to take up all manner of jobs and the widespread nature of their participation is cited as proof that their own willingness to volunteer for registration as potential workers will make a significant contribution to the business of winning the war. The fervent call from the British Corps to double the proportion of women to men working in the manufacture of munitions testifies to their patriotic enthusiasm and serves as an example to the women of Canada.

The Canadian Women's Emergency Corps was organized by the women of the Canadian Club in Toronto, and it registered 3,000 women willing to work in industries involved in war-related production (Ramkhalawansingh 285). A 1916 article by B. D. Thornley focuses on the Corps, describing it as the "Fourth Line Reserves: Son Goes; Father Gives; Mother Knits; Now Along Comes Little Sister and Offers to Hold Down Son's Job for Him" (41). Every member of the family is able to make a contribution – listed, implicitly, in order of importance – and even "Little Sister" has a role to play. Thornley begins the article with an example of a woman who replaces a man as a bank teller, thus enabling him to enlist:

> Yesterday I went by [the bank], glanced in … and found, to my surprise, a neat and precise little girl with a tailored blouse and an office manner correct to infinity, who crouched on the high stool as though she'd grown there always, like a white daisy on a long stalk.
>
> "Hey, presto, the miracle begins," I said to myself. "Adam, hard pressed, turns to the woman thou gavest him. She drops the knitting in favor of the pen, just as she dropped her votes-hatchet, her feather duster, her bridge-cards, in favor

> of the needles. Will she make good on the high stool, do you suppose?" (Thornley 41)

Thornley's image of the woman taking up a clerical position as part of the war effort characterizes Canadian women as dependable and flexible – providing such service as circumstances dictate. Thornley sets up a narrative of the work required of women by the war. First, women have subsumed their political aspirations, their domestic responsibilities, and their leisure pursuits in favour of "knitting" – a recognizable symbol of patriotic concern on the part of women in wartime. Second, as circumstances change, she is willing to give up her knitting to enter the public workplace. She steps in specifically to take the place of a man who is then free to enlist. The purpose of the Women's Emergency Corps was "to stimulate recruiting" (Thornley 43) and to provide employers with substitute labour: "when the needed men are transferred from business life to the army, they would come forward with lists of suitable women substitutes, not at present wage-earners, from which the employer could choose" (Thornley 43). The provision and organization of such alternative labour sources was meant to enable men to enlist, and later to help fill the gaps left by conscription, although Ramkhalawansingh sees this as a way that "working-class men could be forced into service if women were prepared to take their jobs" (286). Certainly, the organization and mobilization of women's willingness to enter the public workplace as part of the war effort represented a shift in attitudes to middle-class women's paid labour whether or not it exploited that labour and gendered class divisions. Ramkhalawansingh also argues that middle-class women's sense of national responsibility could be used to exploit their own labour as part of the war effort: "it was … convenient for industry to exploit the labour of women from the Emergency Corps, whose 'patriotism' allowed them to be moved in and out of the

labour force" (286). This exploitation reinforces assumptions about the temporary nature of women's employment and about the reasons why women were working. Divorcing women's labour from the need for pay – even within the paid labour force – and linking it instead to patriotism and national responsibility sets up the perception of women's paid labour as temporary, flexible, and easily dispensed with. It potentially changes the employer's sense of responsibility to his or her workforce as the line between paid employee and patriotic volunteer becomes blurred.

The 1918 Women's War Conference in Ottawa supported government moves to National Registration and encouraged women to take up jobs that would free men to enlist (Ramkhalawansingh 285-6). In July of that year, the "Women and their Work" department in *Maclean's* also takes up the question of women's registration. Under a heading depicting a woman standing outside her home and watching the war being fought in the clouds above her, an article by Ethel M. Chapman titled "Listing for National Service" encourages Canadian women to participate in the war effort. The article emphasizes the ability of every woman to offer something to the war effort, and the variety of skills that will prove useful and necessary:

> It is another new picture in the great world movie – a million opening doors and a train of women coming out to register for national service. They will come from homes and factories and kitchens and studios and schools and shops and offices; and each will be asked if she has any trade or profession or special training for any kind of work, whether she can harness a horse or drive a tractor or do plain cooking, and whether her health and home ties would permit her, if required, to give full-time paid work. (Chapman "Listing" 95)

Chapman qualifies her assertion of the need for women's participation in paid, public labour as women's private, domestic responsibilities are given precedence over their public, national ones. According to Chapman, women who are raising children and

therefore cannot leave the home are engaged in the "finest service, not for their country alone, but for humanity" ("Listing" 95). Even the unpaid, private labour of domesticity and maternity is co-opted for the war effort[2]. Chapman draws on a rhetoric of national responsibility and encourages pride in being a Canadian woman: "the twentieth century Canadian girl is both clever and ambitious and we hope unselfish; she will not shy at taking responsibility nor at venturing into places where women have not gone before if a woman is needed there" ("Listing" 99). Again, paid employment is reconfigured as a matter of responsible citizenship. What had previously been described as an invasion – the entrance of women into occupations previously occupied exclusively by men – becomes proof of the responsible and heroic nature of Canadian women, who will do whatever is required of them. Patriotism and national responsibility effectively negate many of the more conventional objections to women's paid work and, temporarily at least, enable the fuller participation of women in the life of the public workplace.

Just as young women were encouraged to enter the paid labour force as part of their commitment to the national war effort, so mothers of young women were encouraged to support and enable their daughters' entrance into the public workplace. In the prewar years, mothers were more frequently characterized as reluctant to allow their daughters to enter the public workplace because of concerns about the moral implications

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[2] Chapman does not go as far as Peat who, in her 1917 book, encourages women to become pregnant as an extension of women's war work and as part of the process of national rebuilding:

> Women's war work has been strenuous, hard, self-sacrificing, yet women's war work is only commencing. Realise, my sister women, realise your obligation before it is too late. The nation depends on us. Ours is the sublime task – ours the embodiment of recreation, ours to guard the lives of tiny mortals less fitly born than others. Ours to wield the sceptre of supreme command, ours to wear the crown of pain, the diadem of joy, ours to throw protecting arms around the quivering, tortured nation which is the birthright of our people; ours to rise by the gleaming footstool of sacrifice and service to the golden throne of all love and happiness – the throne of Motherhood. (Peat *Mrs.* 234-5)

of occupying an ostensibly male public sphere. As conditions and attitudes changed through the war, the idea of middle-class women taking up paid employment became increasingly normalized; economic necessity and changed family situations meant that young women who had previously been able to consider marriage as more or less a certainty were now faced with the prospect of having to become financially independent, or at least to make more of a contribution to the family economy. The title of an article by Chapman in the January 1918 issue of *Maclean's* sets out one of the central questions of the discussion around women's economic situation during and after the war: "Your Daughter's Career: The War is Bringing a New Social and Economic Condition for the Girl. Is She Being Fitted to Meet It?" (106). Chapman sets out the ways in which the events of the war and its aftermath will have an effect on both the young men who face injury or death and the young women who remain at home in Canada:

> In the turmoil of any great havoc some incidental changes are likely to creep in so subtly as to be unnoticed until they have crystallized beyond correction. There never was a time, for instance, when the parents of the world were so much concerned about their boys. Everything they had hoped for them, except the one fundamental thing, a virile manhood, has been swept away like tinder in a blaze that will be quenched with nothing less than the whole of their lives, ambitions, everything. The picture is so overwhelming that we lose sight of the quieter drama going on in the wings where the boys' sisters sit, a little heartbroken and lonely and knitting. They don't realize that the thing which has shifted the direction of their brothers' careers is changing life just as surely for them; and their fathers and mothers, who ordinarily would have seen this for them, are, naturally, so absorbed in the more imminent dangers for their boys that the girls' future is left to take care of itself. ("Daughter's" 106)

Chapman's point is an important one. The war changed, or was seen as potentially changing, the lives of young Canadian women just as surely as it changed – or took – the lives of young Canadian men. Marriage was no longer an inevitable prospect, and some could expect husbands or fiancés to return from the front no longer able to work or to be

the main breadwinner for the family ("Daughter's" 110). It becomes part of a mother's responsibility to prepare her daughters for this new life – and that includes preparing them for the public workplace. Chapman points out that "the demand for girls in business is increasing every year, and there are few places where the modern girl with business ability will not venture and succeed" and that a good general education is a requirement for women to succeed ("Daughter's" 107). But, it is the mothers' responsibility to ensure that their daughters are adequately prepared for those new opportunities. Chapman dismisses the impractical education offered in "the 'finishing school' [that] did nothing to train [a woman] for living" ("Your Girl" 111), and emphasizes instead the value of a good college education:

> the men who did the hard, interesting things have gone into the army; a lot of the work they would have done must be carried on by women, and this requires training.... A girl should be just as free as her brother in choosing her career. We can do no less that give her an opportunity to determine for herself how best to make the most of her life. If she does not know what she wants to do -- and most girls don't -- a college training will lay the broad foundation which is invaluable in any business or profession. ("Your Girl" 111)

The comparison of women's wartime labour to the work of being a soldier is reminiscent of the rhetoric that was used to describe the work of the Women's Emergency Corps and the introduction of the national registration of women's labour. Women's wartime paid labour is both justified and celebrated through that comparison, and the implicit invocation of women's duty again appeals to questions of patriotism. Again, the responsibility lies with the mothers of the young women who are facing the prospect of a vastly different society after the war. Mothers must, Chapman argues, educate their daughters so that they will able to enjoy a white-collar career if they are denied the opportunity to devote themselves to married life and motherhood.

Your Daughter's Career

The War Is Bringing a New Social and Economic Condition for the Girl. Is She Being Fitted to Meet It?

By Ethel M. Chapman

Fig. 5. "Your Daughter's Career," illustration and header from Ethel M. Chapman, "Your Daughter's Career," *Maclean's* Jan. 1918: 106.

Peat examines even more fervently than Chapman the kind of education and training that young women will need in the postwar years. Her book *Mrs. Private Peat, by Herself* points to some of the reasons why Peat holds such definite opinions on this question, and how her own experiences in Britain during the early years of the war helped to form those opinions. When war was declared in 1914, Peat was a freelance journalist working in Ulster and covering the political events in Ireland (Peat *Private* 221). At the declaration of war, Peat immediately considered what work she could do: "it was useless to attempt to train for nursing, I had no aptitude for that, and munitions workers of our sex were not called yet" (Peat *Private* 223-4). She ended up, instead, using her training as a journalist to assist other women in finding work and in preparing to enter the public workplace:

> I did my small bit to help. The then editor of a popular woman's paper published weekly in London was Thomas Sapt. He was reorganizing *Everywoman's* and he approached me to run a "Woman Workers' Section." I was to edit the section, write a weekly article of cheer and advice, and answer all enquiries, helping where possible those who needed help to get positions. (Peat *Mrs.* 70-71)

She points out that many women were underprepared for participation in the paid labour force and from this experience, concludes that women should be better prepared to support themselves. Peat is emphatic and makes her point most forcefully in relation to her own infant daughter:

> I saw clearly and emphatically the need for every girl, no matter what her standing in life, no matter what make of spoon (metaphorically) was between her lips at birth, EVERY girl should be given a trade or a profession, EVERY girl should be given a sufficiency of training in business affairs – typewriting, shorthand, something of bookkeeping, how to handle her money, how to buy and how to sell, some idea of method, system and efficiency. Now that I have the blessed gift of a daughter myself, she shall be shown the necessity of learning a means to make her own livelihood. If need be, I would have it that she depended, when of proper age, on her own resources for a time. Anything to give her confidence in her own power, in her own right to share of the world's good *when* she works for that share. (Peat *Mrs.* 72-3)

There are lessons to be learned from the war and from the work it required women to undertake, and those lessons should not be lost in the relief and the celebration that peace brings with it. Cutting across class divisions, Peat's assertion of the importance of training and self-sufficiency for "EVERY girl" contrasts strongly with the questions and concerns raised by others about the effects of women's possible reluctance or refusal to leave the paid labour force and vacate jobs for returning soldiers. Peat sets out a new model for women which insists on the importance of financial independence and self–sufficiency.

In her articles in *Maclean's*, Peat, like Chapman, points to the changing realities for women: "the question of marriage for every woman -- the old time career of us all --

is dead and gone" ("Will the Women" 111). She argues that women need to plan carefully, both individually and collectively, and asserts that "there must be no more haphazard 'something to do' for the woman of tomorrow" (Peat "Will the Women" 111). Looking forward to the end of the war, Peat asks what preparations women can make for the possibility that some will lose jobs after the war or, conversely, that some will have to continue working when they might have previously thought they could stop: "Now is the time of preparation and organization; are we, as sister women, giving thought to such workers as these now?" ("Will the Women" 111). Her emphasis is on women working together to make sense of the new conditions, both those the war has brought and those the postwar years might bring, and on using shared experience to ensure that women are adequately prepared for the conditions ahead.

Even as Chapman and others acknowledge that marriage is not as inevitable as it might once have seemed, they also reinforce the supremacy of the domestic and the importance of marriage and preparation for marriage. Chapman is responsible for some of the most explicit examples of this, and she writes about women's paid employment in relation to questions of marriage and domestic life. While she acknowledges that "the gentle, home-loving mother ... shrinks from the thought of her delicately reared daughter working with men at a 'man's job'" ("Daughter's" 107), Chapman also argues that being in the public workplace is a good way for young women to come into contact with men who may be potential husbands. Women may not have the opportunities for marriage they once had, but paid employment offers the dual advantages of providing a measure of financial independence and bringing them into direct contact with eligible men. Chapman also argues that even if the workplace cannot provide a husband, it can still

provide young women with the kind of human interaction and relationships that might help them deal with the fact of being unable to marry:

> The war has taken away from many a girl the kind of marriage she *wanted*; let her have as many other warm human relationships as possible that she may be spared the unhappiness of a compromise with the kind of marriage she can *get*. ("Daughter's" 109)

The frustrated desire for marriage needs fulfillment in other ways, and through other relationships. Entering the public sphere opens up new possibilities to women, and provides a possible substitute for the marriage that is denied to many. Chapman extends this argument, and cites teaching and nursing as careers in which women might be able to find a fulfilling outlet for the frustrated maternal instincts which they can no longer express in the raising of children of their own. As discussed in the Introduction, the use of domestic precedents to justify women's participation (and containment) in various professions meant that teaching and nursing were often considered most appropriate for women because of the ways in which those professions were seen to replicate the domestic workplace in the public sphere. Chapman encourages women to find public ways to do the kind of domestic work that the war has taken from them.

While Chapman urges mothers to prepare their daughters for the new social and economic conditions that they must now face, Peat criticizes mothers for not having already prepared their daughters to lead independent lives. Peat argues that mothers must understand the new opportunities and challenges that face their daughters and help and support their daughters in making choices and decisions. This does not mean, Peat argues, assuming that young women will never marry: what it does mean is that young women's participation in white-collar paid employment can both enable women to be

financially self-sufficient and enable them to become better and stronger potential wives and mothers:

> Why should she not choose a career as does her brother?
>
> "What is William going to be?" "What is Edna going to do?"
>
> See, the difference in the questions. William is to make something of himself, to develop and expand, to be. Edna -- why Edna has to put in her time somehow till she marries, if she does, if she does not -- oh, well! --
>
> So, will a profession, will work interfere with marriage? No, not after four years of war and a world jolted more or less into common sense. Work fits a girl all the better for marriage; it teaches her to companion her husband. (Peat "Demobilization" 93)

Both Chapman and Peat have to reconcile a contradiction: on the one hand, reinforcing a domestic narrative that eventually places women within the domestic sphere; on the other, acknowledging that the war has taken away the possibility of marriage or financial dependence for many women. Both turn to the idea that working in the public sphere can be viewed as preparation for marriage.

Chapman and Peat view this model of women's paid employment in relation to questions of national responsibility and the building of a strong and moral nation once the war is over. Women's experiences in the public workplace are to be carried over into a post-war effort to build strong families and to raise healthy, moral children – particularly sons. Women's public work during the war and their domestic work afterwards are part of a continuum of patriotic devotion to the nation and its future. To play a more complete and effective role in the raising of future generations women need, as a matter of national and historical responsibility, to broaden their experience in the public sphere:

> while a purely ornamental woman may be very attractive, history shows that the line of heredity between boys and their mothers is very close; it would be rather a calamity to have purely ornamental sons. And the girl with the broader training and deeper understanding of life, if she does marry, should make a pretty fascinating wife and a wise far-seeing mother. ("Daughter's" 111)

This represents a significant departure from the kinds of prewar arguments that women's participation in paid employment would lead them to be negligent mothers, neglecting husband and children to satisfy the selfish desire for a career or profession. Chapman argues that well-educated women can put their education and training to use not only in the public sphere but, equally effectively, in the domestic sphere:

> Perhaps we may find the women of fine brains and education turning their splendid ability into the keeping of their own homes, taking a pride in the management of their kitchens, the care of their nurseries, the simple artistic beauty of their homes. It won't be a spectacular work but it will mean a wonderful lot to the coming generations. ("Creed" 111)

Women's national responsibilities are figured in historical terms. Women are responsible for the raising of future generations of Canadians and their education can enable them to undertake that task more effectively. Chapman and Peat encourage women to take the lessons they have learned in the public workplace back into the home. To do so, they argue, would be to improve not only the home and the family but the nation as well. This argument echoes Laut's assertion of the beneficial effects of paid wartime labour on women as potential mothers and on the families those women will raise.

While vehemently rejecting the idea that women should be contained within the domestic sphere, even Peat does not question the ideological assumption that marriage is and should be the aim of every young woman. In her articles in *Maclean's* and in her book *Mrs. Private Peat, by Herself*, Peat stresses the importance of paid employment for women but also affirms the importance of marriage and motherhood. The two spheres of activity are not mutually exclusive for Peat. In fact, her book opens with a powerful image of her own, simultaneous occupation of the domestic and the professional: "Just in the curve of my arm, hindering the progress of the pencil, yet watching the movement of

it with a calculating eye, is my three-days-old daughter. And I write of war" (Peat *Mrs.*1). The first of her articles for *Maclean's*, published in "Women and their Work" in October 1918, includes a picture of Peat with her daughter, and the "Editor's Note" locates Peat in relation to her husband by referring to her not by her own name but as "Mrs. Private Peat" ("Will the Women" 110). Even as a professional journalist and writer, Peat is located with a framework of domesticity – of husband and child – and the inclusion of a photograph of Peat with her daughter underscores that visually. Another article published two months later also includes a photograph of Peat, this time with both husband and child, and again places her within a domestic narrative of home and family while the content places her within a professional narrative of journalism and war-work. Peat's writing reinforces that sense of the professional and the domestic working together and supporting each other, and her critique of the lack of training received by women draws on the idea that paid work can only improve the mothers that women will one day become even as she acknowledges that not all women can hope to become wives and mothers, given the losses of the war.

The war complicated prewar assumptions about the temporary nature of women's paid employment. Chapman points out that with many women losing husbands or fiancés in the war women's paid work can no longer be automatically considered as something that merely serves to fill in time before marriage.

> Of course a great many girls have been working and earning their living for years, but it has too often been a makeshift affair. The girl wanted something to 'fill in' from the time she left school until the time she was married, a job which would give her enough money to support herself, perhaps, and to buy the frills that every girl wants and which, at present prices, no father with a moderate income and several daughters can afford. The idea that her work would be only temporary has been responsible for many a girl's lack of training. Almost any occupation will do to mark time, but marking time is a hopeless outlook for an indefinite

> period, and many of the girls who least expected it three years ago will be earning their living for the rest of their lives. The new conditions make it important not only that a girl should be trained for some kind of work which will bring her a good living salary, but that the work will be something through which she can have a fuller life and express the best of herself. ("Daughter's" 106)

Social conditions are seen to demand a new self-reliance from women, and potentially to remove the assumption that women's employment is only ever a stop-gap measure. The assertion that paid employment can provide real fulfillment for middle-class women rather than simply being a temporary diversion in the years before marriage reconfigures women's professional and business careers as worthy in and for themselves.

Other articles are not as optimistic that the perception of women's labour as temporary is changing. An article by Edgar Wallace, reprinted from the *Royal Magazine*, takes up the question of the temporary nature of women's paid employment in relation to the war and attempts to reassure those who find the idea of a permanent women's labour force disturbing. But Wallace's argument is interesting in that he does admit that women's presence in the public workplace as a group is permanent. He argues that returning soldiers will find women reluctant to "retire gracefully into the oblivion from whence [they] came" (52), and that women will undoubtedly remain in the public workplace:

> The returned man will come against Woman the Warrior – woman, who, obeying the unerring instinct which every mother-heart holds, the instinct not of self-preservation, but race-preservation, will oppose the return of men into jobs which women can fill. Not necessarily the women who are at present employed in work which the majority hold as temporary, but the army of women who will march along the path which these pioneers have cut. (52)

Even Wallace's title, "Will Women's Invasion of the Labour Market be a Menace to Men After the War?" (52), suggests anxiety about this new occupation of the workplace by women and about the implications it might have beyond the immediate demands of the

war effort. The article's subtitle uses the familiar metaphor of women's invasion of the public sphere; its use reflects anxieties about the preservation of the boundaries of both ideological and literal space.

Wallace extends the metaphor of invasion with his construction of the figure of "Woman the Warrior" (52): she is at first the ally of the men fighting in Europe but later is set against the men who are returning to the jobs they left to enlist. At the same time as he sets up this adversarial model of the workplace, Wallace also points to the importance of exploiting women's skills and training, and he argues that "our greatest problem will not be to oust woman, since woman, the warrior is not to be ousted, but to persuade her to continue in the work she is now performing" (52). Instead of resorting to a more reactionary argument that women should vacate the jobs they have filled during the war by returning to the home, Wallace advocates women taking up jobs that would not be manly enough for the men who have come of age in the trenches. He argues that "there is no reason why, at the end of the war, such men should revert to boy-jobs" when women have proved that they are perfectly capable of filling those positions and men have proved themselves to be more than boys through their experiences in combat (Wallace 52). His argument is unusual in that it posits a changed workplace in the post-war years, and one which can accommodate both men and women in occupations segregated along gendered lines.

While Wallace sees women's participation *en masse* in the paid labour force as permanent and desirably so, he still resorts to the assumption that women's *individual* participation will be temporary. He reassures those who might fear women's more permanent presence in the public workplace with the traditional argument that marriage

and motherhood remain, and will always remain, the primary focus of individual women's lives:

> The minds of the majority of women are fixed upon marriage, settlement, and domestic duties. Not two per cent. [sic] of young women who go to work regard their career as permanent. It is rather the interregnum between school and marriage, an awkward interregnum, where their boundless energy, their youth, and their natural desire for a certain financial independence urge them to energetic action. (53-4)

The notion of work as an "interregnum" between father and husband firmly reinforces the construction of women's paid labour as temporary. The metaphor of the interregnum is somewhat appropriate, given the article's original publication in the *Royal Magazine*, and reinforces the primacy of a domestic narrative for women's lives. The temporary interruption of the patriarchal rule of the father allows the woman a certain liberty, but that freedom is reigned in with the resumption of the rule of patriarchy in the guise of a husband. Wallace also claims to have "conducted enquiries into some 150 cases," and to have discovered that the women "themselves regard the work as purely temporary and for the duration of the war only" (53). His assertion, then, that "not two per cent. [sic] of young women who go to work regard their career as permanent" is given extra weight by his research (Wallace 53). The first of the three points he makes about the women he questioned is that women are not focused on their careers but on their prospects for marriage: "The majority of women questioned have as the goal of their ambitions, marriage and a home. Very few, indeed, seriously consider their future in relation to independent employment" (Wallace 53). Unlike Laut's perspective on the same question, Wallace put the responsibility for the temporary pattern of women's paid employment on the women themselves and not on the society that commonly refuses to sanction the widespread employment of women after marriage. Wallace goes even

further and suggests that any desire on the part of women to stay in the jobs they have had to take up during the war would be undesirable, given the nature of those jobs:

> It will be seen that few of these women regard their positions in light of a permanency, and that is how it should be. The type of mind that looks upon a job which requires little skill and practically no strength as enjoying any permanency is a singularly weak one, and is a source of weakness to the nation. (53)

While women's participation in those jobs is a source of national *strength* during the war, it is recast as a source of national *weakness* after the war. A woman who seeks to prolong her wartime employment after the immediate need is removed demonstrates only that she has a "weak" mind – a diagnosis which calls to mind eugenicist rhetoric about the importance of strong minds for the survival of the race – even though her willingness to undertake that work during the war was read as a sign of strength and moral character. Yet Wallace does not oppose women's labour entirely. In fact, given that in his estimation the average working life of a woman is a mere eight years, he stresses the need for women to continue to engage in paid labour. In fact, he points to the national economic benefits of women in the public workplace:

> Woman herself has marked down the billets she can hold as creditably and as adequately as her male competitors. It is all to the good that she has arrived at such a decision, for without her we might find ourselves faced with the alternative of importing labor or restricting our output of manufacture. (Wallace 54)

Women's labour, as Laut points out, has become an important part of the national economy. Wallace's point is similar: women's labour is proving indispensable to the economic health of the nation, and he speculates on the consequences for a postwar economy. For Wallace, the idea of women working in the paid labour force is not an altogether objectionable one. It is not the fact of individual women working to which he objects, but the fact of them working *permanently*.

Peat also takes up the question of whether or not individual women will be willing to return to the domestic sphere once they have worked in the public sphere. She dismisses the return to domestic and social life as inadequate for women whose minds have been opened and broadened in the world of work: "Women who have sensed the depth of their own intellectual capacity and earning power are not tamely going to return to the eternal grind of housework" (Peat "Will the Women" 112). In a later article, she returns to this question: "I doubt if any woman who has had four years of fullness, can go back to a morning of desultory house-keeping, an afternoon of social calls, a tennis party, a bridge tea and a conversazione!" (Peat "Demobilization" 93). While her characterization of domestic labour as "a morning of desultory house-keeping" is perhaps more a rhetorical strategy than a reflection of reality, her point does echo other arguments about usefulness. In other places, she acknowledges the value of women's domestic labour in ways that move it beyond the characterization she chooses here. She asserts the importance of equal pay for equal work, and suggests that women who work in the domestic sphere should not be obliged to work as unpaid housekeepers. Peat argues that women should be entitled to half their husbands' salary if they take care of the home ("Demobilization" 94). A woman provides the complementary domestic support for her husband's professional life, so she should receive half the monetary reward: the lessons of paid labour – of equal wages for equal work – are to be taken back into the home. To return to a domestic sphere in which work was not valued as it was in the public sphere, and perhaps was not seen as offering the same challenges and rewards, was not an attractive option.

The title of Peat's first article in *Maclean's* sets out very clearly her concerns about what the end of the war might mean for women in paid wartime employment: "Will the Women Go Back? When the Men of the Army Return, What of the Thousands of Women Now Doing Men's Work?" ("Will the Women" 110). This question dominates discussions of women's wartime paid labour and becomes even more urgent in the later stages of the war and in the months immediately following the war when it is combined with concerns about women's role in the work of national reconstruction. Peat is very clear in her assertion that the war has forever changed the lives of women through the broader experiences and opportunities that have been opened up to them in the public sphere. Women have, she argued, realized for the first time the role they can play in national life and the abilities they can contribute to the economic and social life of the nation: "This is a Woman's War ... because for the first time we are being recognized as a section of the Nation and an indispensable section at that" (Peat "Will the Women" 110). Not only have women realized this for themselves, their work has been recognized as an important part of the larger war effort and their contribution acknowledged as vital and necessary. Peat refers in a later article to the "Demobilization of the Woman Army" ("Demobilization" 93) and in doing so places women's wartime efforts on a par with those of the men who fought in the armed forces. She predicts dissatisfaction and resentment among women faced with the prospect of being obliged to give up new economic and professional freedom to accommodate returning soldiers. Peat is emphatic in her assertion that women should be given the right to build on the gains they have made in the public workplace during the war: "We women assumed work – our reward or our punishment, which you will, is that we continue, continue indefinitely, not 'three

years or the duration,' but for all time" (Peat "Demobilization" 93). Moving beyond both Chapman and Laut, Peat forecasts great opportunities for women in the postwar years:

> No longer can we have the excuse that men held us out of the better professions. They did, but that day is done. Uranus is in the ascendant, the star of woman – the woman-age is here – are we worthy?
>
> We have to find new work – the world is our field....
>
> The world is woman's working field – every profession is open, every career possible. ("Demobilization" 94)

Peat's argument is reminiscent of prewar assertions of the increasing opportunities, careers, and professions available to women, and the overly-optimistic declarations that women had already succeeded in opening up a public sphere in which gender was rendered irrelevant by the meritocratic structure that was in place. Chapman resorts to similar rhetoric and invokes the idea of a public sphere in which success was linked to merit alone ("Your Girl" 110), framing this within a narrative of new opportunities in a postwar Canada.

The work of reconstruction, like the war effort itself, is framed in terms of patriotism. Chapman uses a distinctly domestic metaphor to underline women's roles and responsibilities in the rebuilding of the postwar nation: "if the fabric of our nation's life is to be patched up and made stronger and finer than ever the girls of the next few years are going to have to meet life in earnest" ("Your Girl" 111). Women's working lives are co-opted for the postwar work of reconstruction just as they were for the wartime work of defence. Peat stresses the central role women can play in that process, and the important position they will occupy in a new, stronger postwar Canada. She links the future of the nation to the future of the nation's women: "Watch the growth of your womenkind, watch the growth of your children and watch the growth of your country. It

is the one thing" (Peat "Will the Women" 112). Women's participation in paid labour and in the public workplace during the war has, many of these articles argue, secured for women a crucial role in postwar society. Women cannot, and should not, be expected to return to the home where their unpaid labour is exploited and the extent of their contribution to the family economy is rarely acknowledged. The optimism of these later articles – in the last months of the war and the first months of peace – might echo the prewar optimism of some supporters of women's right to paid employment, but it goes further. The war is held up as a time in which women have been tested and have succeeded. There is, writers like Chapman and Peat argue, no justification now for opposing women's presence in the public workplace. When called to action, women acquitted themselves with honour – just as Canadian soldiers fighting in Europe did – and their reward should be the increased respect, the opportunities, and the participation in the nation they have shown they deserve.

The requirements of the war and the resulting changes that it brought about in the Canadian economy meant that, for a while at least, it became both necessary and desirable to employ women in various capacities. The mobilization of women's labour to support the war effort served both economic and political purposes, and helped support and maintain the Canadian economy while so much of the male labour force was fighting in Europe. Changes in the requirements of industry, business, and the professions meant that ideological objections to women's paid labour could be subsumed under larger narratives of patriotism and duty: as Ramkhalawansingh points out, " at any given moment the employment of women and the ideology governing the role of women corresponds to the labour needs of capital" (302). It is interesting that so much of the

discussion around women's wartime paid labour focused not on the experiences of the women themselves *during* the war, but on speculation about the how women's roles and lives would be changed *after* the war. This speculation began surprisingly early in the war, and continued throughout. The optimism generated, in many cases, by a sense that women had finally been given an opportunity to prove themselves equal to the task of working alongside men in the public workplace is striking. However, the transition back to a peacetime economy – to a different set of labour needs – was a difficult one for women workers, especially once the work of reconstruction was considered to be well underway (Prentice *et al* 213). As the war ended and pressure mounted on women to return to the home, thus freeing up jobs for returning soldiers, the promise of that optimism failed to materialize.

Chapter Four

"A most domesticated 'home-body'"

The debate over women's paid employment focused during the war years on the ways in which women's presence might change the public workplace. Optimistic articles predicted a future full of opportunities for women in business and the professions and a meritocracy that did not take gender into account. In the postwar Canadian workplace, women would work alongside their male colleagues without special or discriminatory treatment, having proved themselves during the war. Throughout the 1920's, the emphasis in the debate shifted away from the potential for women to transform the public workplace and back to questions of the negotiation of public and private, of professional and domestic, of conventional feminine roles and paid employment. During the 1920's, both *Maclean's* and *Saturday Night* often published profiles of women who were successful in their careers. These biographical sketches offered examples from which women readers could learn and held up individual women as models for readers to emulate; they sometimes also included practical advice and suggestions. These biographical sketches also reflected the pressure on women during the 1920's to return to the domestic sphere after their participation in the national war effort. They helped construct a model of the postwar Canadian white-collar woman while at the same time they reinscribed aspects of a more traditional model of appropriate feminine activity.

The exemplary biography, as a short sketch and in longer forms, has long been used both to construct and reinforce norms and ideals for women's lives. Jeanne Wood,

in the introduction to her study of exemplary biographical sketches in periodicals, examines the ways in which such sketches can simultaneously both reinforce and challenge dominant ideological constructions of femininity, domesticity, and women's public work – in the case of Wood's study, women's literary production. While this form has the potential to challenge and transform constructions of femininity within a feminist project, Wood points out that it can also be used to co-opt women's public work back into a narrative of conventionally exemplary femininity and women's social and familial responsibilities (33). In *Maclean's* and *Saturday Night* during the 1920's, women's paid labour is placed in relation to family and to traditionally female preoccupations – children, women's health, social welfare, education, motherhood, etc. Because of this, the sketches in *Maclean's* and *Saturday Night* offer complex and sometimes contradictory messages about white-collar women and the negotiation of professional and domestic responsibilities. Through their assertions that these women are exemplary in both the private and public spheres, the articles begin to construct the figure of the "superwoman" – a word that is used in a July 1928 article by Virginia Coyne Knight in *Chatelaine* (21) – who excels in both domestic and professional work and who, by the example constructed in her biography, sets an impossible standard for the woman reader. The unremitting emphasis on the domestic and conventional femininity also reinscribes traditional models of women's work and behaviour, even at the same time as it acknowledges women's participation in the public labour force.

Both *Maclean's* and *Saturday Night* treat single and married business and professional women very differently in their biographical sketches. Different attributes, behaviours, and markers of femininity are used to discuss the women and to construct

exemplary narratives from their lives. Single women are referred to unfailingly as "girls" and are generally defined in terms of physical attractiveness or beauty[1]. This emphasis on physical appearance relies on a model of women's lives predicated on the importance of sexual attractiveness and, by extension, the potential for marriage. This, in turn, reinforces the perception of women's labour as necessarily and inevitably temporary. These biographical sketches, with their insistence on young women's potential for marriage and temporary commitment to professional and business work are part of the reconstruction of the role of women in the public and private spheres, the public workplace and the family home, in postwar Canada.

One of the central traits that characterizes the description of young working women at this time is *normalcy*. In attempts to counteract concerns about the effects of working in paid employment, young women who are working or studying are frequently described as being normal despite their unusual occupations or levels of education. A 1921 article in *Maclean's* that profiles three women university graduates offers one of the most explicit examples of this. One of the two single women profiled in this unsigned article is Isabel Jones, the first recipient of a scholarship from the Federation of University Women of Canada who, in 1921, was working for her doctorate from the Université de Paris while teaching at the University of Saskatchewan. Jones is described as being "really ... a very human type of girl," and as "the most natural, widely-interested girl that ever did chores about the house, played out of doors, or took part in community

[1] Profiles of older single women rarely appear unless the woman has been widowed and has entered the paid labour force to support her family after her husband's death. Other older single women appear as warnings about the dangers of seeing paid work as something more than a temporary occupation that can and will be given up after marriage. The "tragedy" of a woman who finds herself alone at forty – however successful her career might be – is a common narrative that is sometimes treated explicitly and sometimes hovers in the background as an implicit threat.

affairs" ("College" 60). The other single woman profiled is Susie Chase, the first woman to attend the Ontario Agricultural College. After discussing her accomplishments and the experience at the college, the unsigned article goes on to qualify those with a more personal description of Chase:

> She is, after all, just a "regular girl" -- the normal kitchen, drawing-room, class-room, outdoor combination type. She doesn't swagger about in men's garments nor feel any self-consciousness in the knowledge that she is doing an unusual thing. ("College" 62)

Both are constructed as women who are *normal* and who are therefore unthreatening and unremarkable aside from the fact of their education. Chase is a "normal kitchen, drawing-room, class-room, outdoor combination type" and the spatial qualifiers used make more explicit what being a "regular girl" means. The prominence of the kitchen at the beginning of the list situates Chase within the domestic sphere, as does the comment that Jones does "chores about the house" ("College" 60), and this reinforces the idea that women's work outside the home will not threaten their work within it. The mention of the drawing-room not only reinforces women's education as a classed privilege but also emphasizes women's social functions and responsibilities within the family. The mention of the class-room goes some way towards normalizing women's education at the same time as it situates Chase as being like any other young girl in the school-room. The mention of outdoor activities in the descriptions of both Jones and Chase is, perhaps, part of a narrative of concerns about physical fitness and strength, and about healthy living: neither woman can be characterized as someone who has narrowly devoted herself to intellectual work. Aspects of women's domestic and private lives are introduced into profiles of their professional work to mitigate fears about the effects of intellectual, professional, and public work on their minds and bodies. Aspects of the domestic sphere

are stressed as qualifiers to women's professional roles and as central to how *normal* the young women are. It is through her connections to the domestic sphere that a woman can maintain her femininity, even while she is participating in the paid labour of the public sphere.

Embedded in the statement that Chase is "just a 'regular girl'" are assumptions about what being a "regular girl" means, based on conventional models of femininity and domesticity. Also in that statement are implicit anxieties about what being an *ir*regular girl might mean. The negative description of Chase that follows the list of domestic attributes offers some insight into those anxieties. Chase is an educated woman but she "doesn't swagger about in men's garments" ("College" 62): she does not fulfill a stereotype of educated women that draws on anxieties about the unsexing influence of knowledge and academic work, as well as concurrent anxieties and stereotypes about female sexuality. The idea of women in men's clothes invokes anxieties about cross-dressing and the destabilization of gendered boundaries and identities that implies; the verb *swagger* suggests an unfeminine degree of self-confidence and comfort in the public sphere. That Chase does neither of these things reinforces the sense of her femininity and appropriate modesty. The article is even more explicit about this, suggesting how important it is: Chase is described as having no "self-consciousness in the knowledge that she is doing an unusual thing" ("College" 62). Chase's feminine modesty does not allow herself to be aware of the exceptional nature of her achievements, and she is not focused on her self in an unfeminine way.

A short article in *Saturday Night* at the end of the 1920's takes up the threat of public work to women's femininity in a way that refers to similar stereotypes and which

is concerned, again, about women being *normal*. The article's title, "Manly Women are Doomed," is suggestively melodramatic even though the article focuses ostensibly on women's fashion. The physical markers of femininity become the primary concern and are related to character, rather than remaining external and superficial. A woman who is seen as dressing in a "masculine" manner is described as "ap[ing] men and suppress[ing] every indication of her own sex" ("Manly" 14), a characterization reminiscent of Mary O'Conner Newell's figure of the successful professional woman who emulates men and becomes "desexed" in order to succeed (99). The article places this kind of masculine dress as "really a symptom of the 'inferiority complex,'" pathologizing it, and making it part of an uncertain grasp on the value of femininity: "These Eves feel that they are really and truly inferior to men, therefore they strive to imitate them. The real, superior woman is always essentially feminine" ("Manly" 14). "Femininity" or being a "real ... woman" is not only a state of character, but is also manifested in external appearance. A "real, superior woman" must display her femininity on the outside, in her dress, in order to avoid accusations of that she is "manly." Anxieties about the effects of public work on women's femininity are reflected in concerns about women's bodies and physical appearance.

Single women are frequently described in terms of their physical appearance in order to counteract concerns about the potential loss of femininity or accusations of being overly masculine or desexed. In fact, being physically attractive is often cited as a reason for women's success, further reinforcing the idea that conventional femininity must be preserved and valued in the public sphere. When Dorothy G. Bell is attempting to

explain Esther Richardson's success as an international buyer for a Canadian store, she focuses on Richardson's physical appearance and demeanour for her explanation:

> perhaps it was because this cheery salesgirl always had something bright and happy to say and said it in a voice that people liked to hear -- a voice that is soft and very gentle but quite distinct and clear -- that customers preferred to wait until she was free that she might help them. Or it may have been that they found a sympathetic, understanding being whose advice was as ready and whose logic was as sound regarding troubles other than just those concerning hats. It is possible that they may have liked to watch the keen lights that changed in her eyes as she talked -- eyes that might have been shrewd except that they were too deep and too sparkling to be anything else than kind. Whatever the reason, she sold and sold well. (Bell 1 Apr. 1924: 70)

Richardson is defined in terms that rely on conventional models of femininity: she is soft-spoken, with a cheerful and sympathetic manner and eyes that are deep, sparkling, and kind. Richardson is described as "probably one of the first feminine buyers from this continent" and the choice of *feminine* over *female* or *woman* as the adjective underscores the emphasis on traditionally feminine traits and on a model of femininity that could be used to justify, or at least defend, women's paid work in the public sphere. Not only are conventionally feminine characteristics not necessarily a hindrance in the public workplace, they can also actually be assets and enhance the ways women perform in their jobs. In a short article profiling Grace Pomery, a woman who earns her living making wax flowers, Gertrude S. Pringle focuses on her subject's artistic talent but introduces Pomery by describing her physical appearance: Pomery began working when she was "in her early twenties, slight, girlish, with thick, bobbed blonde hair, delicate features and long, pointed artistic fingers" (Pringle 1924: 70). While the "long, pointed artistic fingers" might have some relevance to her chosen profession, her "thick, bobbed blonde hair [and] delicate features" do not. Still, they serve to present a picture of a woman who is not only artistic and beautiful but also successful in her business.

For women to succeed and to preserve their femininity in the public sphere the appropriate physical characteristics are not the only requirement. Other stereotypically feminine characteristics are invoked to explain, justify, and support women's successes in the public workplace. The combination of femininity with professional success helps to justify the presence of women in the public workplace and defend against accusations of unwomanliness. A profile of A. K. Smith, a foreign buyer for a Canadian store, relies on the invocation of what might be considered typically feminine characteristics to explain her success:

> she has a personality that charms, conversational powers that interest and entertain, a sympathy and understanding of human nature in general that makes friend for her wherever she goes. (Bell 1 Feb. 1924: 56)

She is not only kind and personable, but someone who "has the interest of every one of [her customers] at heart" (Bell 1 Feb. 1924: 56), and she is, because of that, an attractive woman. This is translated into business success, and so the personal and the professional are once more conflated. A profile of Miss O'Grady, a foreign buyer for a large Canadian store, cites her choice of career as one for which stereotypical feminine qualities are particularly suitable:

> Miss O'Grady declares that a woman is a better buyer than a man.
>
> "A woman is more careful of details. She is more artistic. Her love of a bargain is greater. She is buying in the main for women, and because she is a woman she knows what women want. Men, of course, don't agree with me. They are vain creatures, and refuse to bow to our superior judgment," and Miss O'Grady laughed whole-heartedly. (Bell 1 Mar. 1924: 62)

Just as nursing and teaching found their ideological justifications in the domestic equivalents and the traditional services performed by women within the family, so other occupations construct their own justifications by using traits considered stereotypically feminine – empathy, ease in social situations, an eye for a bargain, etc. Using feminine

traits in relation to business and professional work is not only a way to negate or pre-empt any possible threat that a working woman might be seen to pose, it is also a way to justify women's careers, and to carve out areas of professional and business life for which women are particularly suited through the attribution to women of certain feminine qualities that are then deemed necessary for the job in question.

Enid Griffis' profile of Violet Christie, who is "manager, secretary-treasurer and shareholder in the Red Deer Valley Coal Company" and, as the title tells the reader, manages three companies, highlights Christie's suitably feminine modesty:

> to admit that brains were a necessity would have been to admit that she had brains, and Miss Christie hates admitting things about herself. It seems to be her only fault. She is too modest. (Griffis 66)

Although it is described as a "fault," Griffis' approval is obvious. Christie is almost too feminine for her own good: her modesty will not allow her to acknowledge the extent of her own achievements. The article ends there, with Christie's womanly modesty almost undermining the acknowledgment that her success is hard-won and requires skill and specialist knowledge.

The question becomes more complicated when women are in professions such as law and medicine that were conventionally considered to be masculine fields. Stereotypical feminine traits cannot be used to support women's participation in those professions; instead, the focus is placed on the contrast between the women's femininity and their professional work. A 1929 sketch of Vancouver lawyer Edith Louise Patterson provides an example of that tension. Patterson had taken a BA and MA in Political Economy at McGill University, where she had studied under Stephen Leacock, and then studied Law at Osgoode Hall in Toronto before returning to Vancouver to practice as a

lawyer and, in 1929, to take over from Helen Gregory McGill on the bench of the Juvenile Court. However, Georgie Patterson Lane's questions do little to engage with these aspects of Patterson's experience and education, and they focus on Patterson's personal life at the expense of her professional life – even though that focus appears to make her uncomfortable:

> Having merely raised eyebrows at the two best questions of the day: "Do you golf?" and "Do you play bridge?" Miss Patterson was asked what might be her vices – indoors and out. But it seems that a legal mind occupies itself largely with the law. Also, it seems that there is really something more to being a woman barrister than just chatting cozily for a bit with one's client and then dodging into court every now and again to accept delivery of a favorable judgment. (Lane 81)

The tone is light, but the question of what more the legal profession might entail for women is never addressed. Having dismissed women's professional work in the opening paragraph as less noteworthy than a woman choosing to be a "quiet home body" (Lane 81), Lane goes on to focus on Patterson's personal likes and dislikes and on her physical appearance. Her appearance receives the most attention, which is not surprising given that she is a single woman, and Lane stresses Patterson's attractiveness:

> In appearance, Miss Patterson is the tailor-made type and suggests rather the social young woman-about-town than the young advocate of the law courts. She is tall and dark and slim, with clear-cut features and a humorous crinkle about her eyes. (Lane 81-82)

Lane situates Patterson within a social rather than a professional context. She presents her as a stylish, beautiful young woman who is well-dressed, popular, and affluent. While presented as *not* being the case, Patterson's image of "chatting cozily for a bit with one's client," as well as her questions about golf and bridge, remain an important part of the overall impression left by the article, leaving the emphasis more on the social than on the professional. This, combined with the physical description, presents Patterson more

as a socialite than as a hard-working and well-educated lawyer. Attention is deflected away from the disjunction of feminine characteristics and a masculine profession by this construction of Patterson as a social figure rather than as a professional one.

This alleged disjunction between stereotypical markers of femininity and masculine professions is sometimes framed in terms of surprise that one woman could possess both beauty and intelligence, or could retain her femininity when she is constantly obliged to behave in masculine ways. A 1925 article in *Saturday Night* takes this idea further and cites this combination of exemplary personal and professional qualities as evidence of historical change and progress for professional women. To put an increasing distance between modern professional women and the early pioneers in fields such as medicine and business, the article focuses on "Blue-stockings of Today and Yesterday" ("Blue" 21) and stresses the importance of physical markers of femininity for professional and business women. The short, unsigned article opens with the author's surprise at being told that a particularly pretty young woman had recently qualified as a physician. The author immediately puts the question into physical terms, wondering at the disjunction between the femininity of the woman's appearance and the profession that she is entering:

> Anything less like a doctor could not be imagined. I marvelled that that pretty little head could contain so much of the realities of life – its terrors, suffering and cruelties – and remain apparently young, fresh, charming.
>
> The truth is, I now realize, that the Blue-stocking of the Victorian age has departed forever with her.
>
> The old idea that beauty and brains are ever divorced is now exploded. The girl of brains, the girl who chooses medicine, the Bar, accountancy and half a dozen other learned professions is not distinguishable from her sister whose life centres about the house, the tennis court, golf course and theatre. ("Blue" 21)

That the woman's "pretty little head" could contain the necessary knowledge and professional expertise to practice as a doctor is the central contradiction. The physical markers of women's intellectual work or professional involvement, the "big goggles, gawky feet… and ill-fitting clothes," can no longer be relied upon to identify the intellectual woman or the middle-class working woman. Such a woman is now indistinguishable from middle-class women who work in the home and engage in leisure activities. At the same time as she asserts the "new" combination of "beauty and brains," the author undercuts the assertion: she calls into question the woman doctor's professionalism with the comment that "anything less like a doctor could not be imagined"; and she qualifies her femininity by the comments that she remains "*apparently* young, fresh, charming" and that her external appearance belies her internal knowledge of "the realities of life – its terrors, suffering and cruelties" ("Blue" 21). In a manner reminiscent of Lane's dismissal of professional women as nothing to be remarked upon and her assertion that to be a "quiet home body" is more noteworthy, this article's author argues that an increase in the number of "clever women" ("Blue" 21) has led to an increasing acceptance of women's intellectual and professional work and an accompanying lack of surprise at the number of women whose physical appearance does not signify intelligence in a recognizable way:

> we cease to exclaim as though at some marvel when we hear of the brilliant records which are constantly being achieved by girls so dainty, so essentially feminine, that it is only with an effort one convinces oneself of the brain behind the smiling, smooth, and astonishingly youthful face. ("Blue" 21)

This combination of "brains and beauty" is apparently now so common that it is no longer worth noting, and this puts an extra pressure on professional and business women. Professional or business success is no longer enough unless combined with personal traits

that reinforce a stereotypical and idealized model of femininity. While the article does not explain when exactly the "Yesterday" was in which professional women were apparently so different, it does use the idea of historical progress to construct its own narrative of change. Professional women of "Yesterday" were expected to focus only on their work, even though that was often at the expense of the their personal lives and appearances. Drawing on a conventional picture of femininity that demands women's primary concerns be personal, be they domestic, maternal, or concerned with physical appearance, women of "Today" are obliged to occupy both spheres, the professional and the personal, simultaneously, and to occupy both in an exemplary way.

With this insistence on the exemplary occupation of both the domestic and professional spheres comes a blurring of the line between the spheres. This threat to the stability of the ideological separation of the domestic and the professional required new ways to reinscribe the boundary between them. As the threat to the ideological separation of the spheres became more real, anxieties about the preservation of what was frequently cited as "natural" became more intense. Several articles attempt to do this by using women's bodies to reinforce the distinction between the home and the public workplace. Women were often ascribed separate professional and personal personae, and this was sometimes reflected in descriptions of difference in women's physical appearance between home and office. A 1921 article in *Maclean's* profiles Ethel M. Vance, a woman from Vancouver who began as a stenographer and went on to "[head a] $1,000,000 Corporation" (Bell 1 May 1921: 65). Vance is described as a woman who has "worked and fought her way in open competition" to become "the only woman on the

Board of Directors of twenty-four men" (Bell 1 May 1921: 66). The physical description of Vance makes a distinction between her public and private personas:

> She is possessed of a perplexing personality with a charm all its own and when in her office one is almost afraid of her so abrupt and sharp is she and so intent and keen on business and business only.... At a moment's notice her blue gray eyes can harden into pin points of glinting steel and flash forth blue flames at the cause of her annoyance, and once that change has taken place there is no altering the course upon which the mind behind them has determined. When at home however and away from the office and her work, those same steely gray eyes are soft and sparkling with fun and the joy of living, the love of her companions, and she is ready for anything in the way of a lark. (Bell 1 May 1921: 66)

Both her physical appearance and her character embody the boundary between the professional and domestic spheres, and she maintains that line through the distinctions in her behaviour. Her eyes are "steely gray" in the office, and "soft and sparkling" in the home. Her personality, which can be so "perplexing," so "abrupt and sharp," and so determined in the office, is more concerned with "fun and the joy of living," and "ready for anything in the way of a lark" in the home. The boundaries between the public and private spheres are reinscribed: they find a manifestation not only in the physical spaces of home and office, but on the body and character of the woman who crosses over between the spheres through her paid labour outside the home.

While biographical sketches of single women draw on physical appearance and character as markers of femininity, sketches of married women rely on a different set of attributes. Many of the married women profiled in *Maclean's* and *Saturday Night* are mothers as well as professionals or business women and their femininity is highlighted, not surprisingly, through their domestic roles and through their families. There are, of course, exceptions. A sketch of Dr. Augusta Stowe-Gullen in *Saturday Night* deals with Stowe-Gullen's remarkable professional career and her central role as a pioneer for

women in the medical profession in Canada. While the article does rely less on assertions of conventional femininity and more on the privileging of public achievements over private ones than many other articles do, it does construct Stowe-Gullen as a woman rather than as a professional in recognizable ways. While she is married, there is no mention made of her husband and the assertions of her femininity focus largely on her early life. This insistence on Stowe-Gullen as a girl and a young woman is used to construct a kind of femininity somewhat belied by the photograph of her in later life that accompanies the article. The article's full title places Stowe-Gullen as a public figure, a professional physician, and a woman with a strong commitment to improving women's education:

> Dr. Augusta Stowe-Gullen: One of Canada's Most Prominent Women Doctors in Medicine, who was a brave pioneer in Educational Affairs where women were concerned, and whose courage, endurance, and ability made the way clear and easy for women in the study of medicine. (Ridley 29)

Her professional life and experience is cited as remarkable and a worthy example to other women. The article goes on to describe her as a woman who has succeeded not only professionally but also in other public forums:

> But Dr. Stowe-Gullen is not only distinguished in her profession. She is noted also for her interest in public affairs, especially as they relate to women. Having demonstrated in a most practical way that women can succeed in medicine, she devoted her gifts of eloquence and logic to speaking in the cause of woman suffrage.... True to her unfaltering purpose to venture far in the cause for enlarged opportunities for women, Dr. Stowe-Gullen was one of the first women in Canada to brave the trying ordeal of a public election.... A convincing speaker gifted generously with wit and humor, she speaks not only for the organizations with which she is immediately connected, but for other bodies whose aim it is to promote human welfare and to give larger opportunities to women, educationally, medically, legally and politically. (Ridley 29)

This article, which is one of the few full-length articles in *Saturday Night* during the 1920's to deal explicitly with women's professional lives, takes Stowe-Gullen very

seriously as a professional woman[2]. As in other biographical sketches where accounts of women's public success are juxtaposed with accounts of their personal virtues – their exemplary motherhood, their beauty, their love for the domestic, etc – this article resorts to conventional markers of femininity to mitigate the potentially threatening figure that Stowe-Gullen might present in ideological terms. While this article does not set up

SATURDAY NIGHT
WOMEN'S SECTION
TORONTO, CANADA, MARCH 10, 1928

Fig. 6. Dr. Augusta Stowe-Gullen, photograph from Hilda Ridley, "Dr. Augusta Stowe-Gullen," *Saturday Night* 10 Mar. 1928: 29.

[2] This is also one of the very few articles in *Maclean's* or *Saturday Night* in this period to mention the campaign for women's suffrage. It is very unusual for a profile of a white-collar woman to locate her in relation to the political changes taking place for women and the granting of women's suffrage.

Stowe-Gullen in a maternal role, whether literally or figuratively, and no mention is made of her marriage, it does employ other markers of femininity that draw attention to Stowe-Gullen as a professional *woman*, rather than simply as a professional.

Accompanying the article is a large photograph of Stowe-Gullen. She is a mature woman, who looks directly at the camera and gives the impression of control, strength, and self-possession. The text of the article, however, avoids physical description of the woman in the photograph and focuses instead on the child and the young woman who grew up hoping to "work for women" and who chose to go to medical school even though that, it is suggested, meant that she was necessarily choosing not to consider marriage:

> When other pretty young girls were dreaming of love and romance, Augusta Stowe – as pretty as any of them – was contemplating a college career that would equip her, in the best possible way, to be of service to women. (Ridley 29)

It is important for the article to emphasize the fact that, being "as pretty as any of them," Stowe-Gullen could have chosen a more conventional life for herself, and that she was not driven to a profession through her own lack of marriage prospects. Even Stowe-Gullen's feminism is presented initially in relation to her physical appearance – to the visible markers of her femininity: "The young girl, Augusta, who concealed such an inflexible purpose and strong brain beneath her youthful and very feminine exterior, resolved that she would blaze a trail for her sex in her own country" (Ridley 29). This emphasis on her "youthful and very feminine exterior" -- as opposed, by implication, to her not-so-feminine interior -- is in direct contrast with the accompanying photograph. This disjunction between the textual and photographic images offers the reader an

explicit example of this reliance on conventional markers of femininity – on youth and beauty – to supplement and accompany the detailed account of the professional activities of a woman who is, as her photograph suggests, no longer as young or conventionally "feminine" (in the ways in which the article's text defines those terms) as the physical picture offered by the text. She is a married woman but she is still described in terms reserved for single women – even though that entails detailing her personal history and locating her femininity in the past rather than in the present.

While the profile of Stowe-Gullen uses physical beauty in terms of Gullen's personal history as a marker of exemplary femininity, there are some other profiles that use appearance more immediately when discussing married women. In an article entitled "Pearle R. Carey Makes a Success of Selling Cars Because She Loves Them," Bell profiles the first woman to sell cars for a living in Canada. While Carey is married, and her husband is mentioned in the article, there is no mention of children. Instead, as with single women, Carey's femininity is constructed through her physical appearance:

> From beneath a chic French hat with a saucy feather, two eyes, so brown as to be almost black, offered me a casual smile -- a smile so casual that it said to me plainer than words could have done, 'Take it or leave it.' Yet as a daintily white-gloved hand clasped mine for a moment I knew that I would take it.... Small, essentially feminine, exquisitely dressed, it would be easier to picture her playing bridge, sipping tea, or dancing rather than tackling the man-sized job of selling automobiles to all kinds and classes in one of the largest cities in Canada. (Bell 15 Apr. 1924: 68)

The characteristic concern with femininity is made explicit: Bell presents Carey as being "essentially feminine," and this is perhaps all the more important given the field in which Carey works. But the tone of the description differs significantly from descriptions of single women. While single women are frequently described in terms that suggest their normalcy, their wholesomeness, their love of the domestic, and their good humour, Carey

is described in much more sexualized and worldly terms. The feather in her fashionable hat is "saucy," her eyes are dark (in contrast to the almost inevitably grey eyes in profiles of single women), and her smile is "casual." Bell's description of meeting Carey is closer in tone to a romantic encounter or a seduction than a meeting between interviewer and subject:

> [she] offered me a casual smile -- a smile so casual that it said to me plainer than words could have done, 'Take it or leave it.' Yet as a daintily white-gloved hand clasped mine for a moment I knew that I would take it. (15 Apr. 1924: 68)

Carey cannot be described in relation to her children; yet, she is a married and implicitly sexualized woman, so she cannot be described with the same vocabulary as the unmarried "girls" who appear in other sketches. Bell's description of Carey -- a married woman but not a mother -- functions in a space between the unmarried "girls" and the mothers who are presented as models of maternal femininity in other articles. Her professional work is located as something in which she became interested through her husband, and something at which they continue to work together.

The profile by Elizabeth Bailey Price of Madge Macbeth, who herself often wrote for *Maclean's*, constructs Macbeth's femininity in a similar way, although it does take some account of Macbeth's children. Both Macbeth's domestic and professional life receive little attention in comparison to that paid to her personal appearance and character. Macbeth is described as "a small, dark-haired, vivacious and fascinating little person... [with] merry brown eyes"; her charm is exemplified by her "absence of *ego*," and the story of her life culminates in "the dainty Madge Macbeth of to-day, with her black bobbed hair, her King Tut gowns, her passion for earrings -- a figure from the book of Vogue" (Price 50, 51). But, she is also the "charming Madge Macbeth serving tea by

her own fireside, sympathetic Madge Macbeth who is always ready to extend a helping hand to a fellow writer" (Price 51). Macbeth's more modern version of femininity, exemplified by her bobbed hair, is here combined with a more traditional version that serves tea by the fire. But, whereas married women are usually presented in relation to husband and children, Macbeth is not -- except in passing. Perhaps the fact that Macbeth was widowed before her career began can account for this: she had been a married woman, but she now has no husband, and she is known professionally to the readers of *Maclean's* and other Canadian magazines as well as in her role as a successful novelist. She, like Carey, cannot be described in terms reserved for single women or "girls," but she steps outside the conventional terms reserved for married women. Macbeth's comment that she used to believe writing was a suitable profession because it was something that she could do at home to support her children gestures towards the kind of maternal responsibility that figures so prominently in sketches of other married women with children, but the focus of this article remains other, more sexualized markers of femininity.

When biographical sketches do focus on married women and their children, they construct an exemplary vision of motherhood. This further reinforces the sense that women in the professions and business must excel not only in the public sphere but also in the domestic. The private work of mothering is central to these sketches of married women who work outside the home, and is central to the reassertion of those women's femininity. In the article that profiles three women graduates cited earlier, the one married woman of the three is located in relation to her adult sons and to her role as mother:

> The last two winters she has been in the university, graduating this spring with her degree of M.A. It is doubtful, however if she is as proud of this as of the domestic title of the letters spelled together, for her sons promise careers almost as brilliant as her own. ("College" 63)

Her success in university is firmly placed in a subordinate relation to her success as a mother: she is more proud of being a "ma" than an "M.A." Her private work is at least as important, if not more so, than her public work. In that same article, the career of one of the single women is co-opted into this rhetoric of motherhood. Susie Chase's interest in agriculture might, perhaps, lay her open to charges of being unwomanly, but the article pre-empts that criticism by addressing it explicitly:

> "Even the care of young animals wouldn't be far removed from mothercraft?" we suggested, and she agreed that it wouldn't, "if the young animals didn't grow up so fast." ("College" 62)

Her interest in agriculture is transformed into an interest in animal husbandry, which is linked to a concern with "mothercraft." Her response places her within a conventional narrative of mothers bewailing how quickly their children grow up. Even though she is unmarried and not a mother, she is drawn into a rhetoric of motherhood and maternal feeling not only to provide her with an exemplary domestic life to complement her professional life, but also to justify her interest in a profession not typically open to women.

That women should be considered exemplary in both their professional and domestic work leads to a frequent idealization of the domestic and of the women who occupy it. The home life of Mary Ellen Smith, a British Columbia politician, for example, is addressed in some detail:

> In her home life, before she began to take an active part in public affairs, and while her children were still at school, she was the loving conscientious mother, a

> charming mistress of a delightful house, a tender counsellor to her four sons and daughters, wrapped up in their welfare, as in that of her husband. (Lugrin 60)

The picture that N. de Bertrand Lugrin paints of Smith's domestic life is an idyllic one. While this life is situated in the past, in the time when her children were young, the article implies that her exemplary occupation of the domestic sphere remains important. Her concern with her family and their well-being did not, Lugrin admits, prevent her from taking an active interest in "what was happening in the world outside the home … whether of local, provincial or of worldwide importance" (60). Smith manages to combine work both in and outside the home, and to excel in both.

A 1925 sketch of composer Gena Branscombe, written by J. Herbert Hodgins, makes a similar point. Hodgins portrays Branscombe as a woman who has excelled in every way, both domestically and professionally. The article's title draws attention to Branscombe's doubled life and balances the two demands equally, rhetorically at least: "Canadian Composer has Two Selves – One for her Music; One for her Home" (Hodgins 78). Branscombe's commitment to "Home and children! Not an easy combination for an artist!" (78) elicits nothing but praise from Hodgins as he goes on to ask,

> How has it been possible for Gena Branscombe to write one hundred songs, four cycles for solo voices, four suites for piano, a violin sonata, three violin suites, seventeen choruses, a festival prelude for orchestra and an opera and continue to run a domestic *entourage* which has included four small daughters? (79)

While only addressing her music and professional career in the most superficial terms, Hodgins focuses on Branscombe's role as wife and mother, and how she maintains this "domestic *entourage*." He ends the article by placing Branscombe in a line of maternal succession, a mother to her own daughters but indebted to the love and inspiration provided by her own mother:

> Gena Branscombe, composer-genius, glorifying motherhood in her life and in her art, invariably returns tribute to her own mother to many of whose lovely poems she has given exquisite musical setting. To that mother's constant inspiration she says she owes it all. (Hodgins 80)

Branscombe, who is earlier described as "without question ... the most distinguished woman composer who has gone forth from Canada" (Hodgins 78), is identified so completely with her role as mother to her daughters that even her professional work is a way of "glorifying motherhood."

While Branscombe is cited as combining the demands of professional and family life completely and almost seamlessly, other women are described as struggling with the negotiation of the two. Amy J. Roe's 1925 sketch of Irene Parlby domesticates a woman who fought for women's political rights, who served as Minister without Portfolio in Alberta from 1921 to 1935 in which capacity she "supported and encouraged farm women to think beyond domestic questions and to broaden their horizons" (Prentice *et al* 268), and who "became a spokesperson for women's issues, such as the provision of a minimum wage for women, married women's property rights, mothers' allowances, and children's welfare" (Prentice *et al* 281). By the time Roe's article was published, Parlby had already organized and served as president of the United Farm Women's Association; she was elected in 1921 as the Alberta MLA for Lacombe, and in the same year was appointed the first woman cabinet minister in Alberta; in 1925, Parlby was successful in sponsoring the Minimum Wage for Women Act (Famous). Yet all these things are barely mentioned in Roe's article, and Parlby is represented as "at heart ... a home woman" (Roe 94). She is described in relation to home and family life:

> Mrs. Parlby has not sought public life, for she is naturally of a retiring nature. Rather it has sought her out and pushed her steadily forward. Endowed with a truly English natural reserve of manner she is perhaps handicapped, at least saved

> from being a "good politician." At heart she is a home woman and a true lover of the country.... Not possessing robust health she would be quite content if allowed to remain quietly at her attractive country home with her husband and her son, her garden and her beloved books. (Roe 94)

Parlby is characterized as having entered politics reluctantly -- without any trace of the necessary but unfeminine (or implicitly masculine) political ambition that would make her a "good politician," and as preferring instead to "devote herself to … her husband and her son."

The biographical sketches of married professional and business women also address those women's other domestic accomplishments, even when they are not directly related to their professional and business careers. After the discussion of Genevieve Lipsett-Skinner's many and varied professional accomplishments, Edith G. Bayne praises Skinner for her culinary skills: "With all her tremendous responsibilities she has made quite a local reputation as a fine cook, her home-made bread being particularly praiseworthy" (114). Often tacked on as the final comment in an article, leaving the reader with an impression of the domestic rather than of the professional, these little assertions of the domestic reinforce the version of femininity which demands the exemplary occupation of *both* spheres.

The reinscription of marriage and family as the primary focus for women remained central to many articles, despite the sympathy expressed for those women who would be unable to marry as a direct result of the war. A short 1924 article in *Saturday Night* titled "Women Who Never Marry" makes it clear that a woman who fails to fulfill that part of her life will always be unhappy and mourning the family she never had:

> There is no greater or more pitiable tragedy than that of the woman, moulded by nature for wifehood and motherhood, who is sentenced to solitary life. Such women never bloom. They turn sour.... In the end they become just 'Old

> Maids'.... They have but one preoccupation: they are trying to forget the dream man and the dream children who will never, never live. They are haunted by the kisses that were never impressed upon their lips, by the tiny hands that never clung about their necks. But they are inevitable: for there are not enough men to go round -- and some must be left to pass unfulfilled and empty. ("Women Who" 35)

This kind of image, while reminiscent of earlier Victorian pictures of disappointed spinsters, also represents an attempt to combine an increasing emphasis on domesticity, marriage, and the home with the reality of a post-war nation that had lost many of its young men. It articulates the inherent and sometimes cruel contradiction in a rhetoric that demands a return to home and marriage when many women had lost husbands or fiancés in the First World War. The article constructs a tragic figure who is "inevitable" as a result of the post-war shortage of men and yet is almost grotesque in her single-minded obsession with the "dream man and the dream children who will never, never live," and with the physical pleasures she has been denied: the "kisses" and the "tiny hands." Women who *choose* not to marry are dismissed in the opening paragraph in a recognizable rhetorical sleight of hand that makes them into something so common as to be unworthy of comment and those enduring the "tragedy" of "enforced spinsterhood" into something *new* and to be pitied:

> There are two sorts of unmarried women: those who remain single for choice, and those who remain single because there are not enough men to go round. Of the first category I am not concerned. The girl bachelor is no uncommon phenomenon these days, and the slur of celebacy [sic] passed with the close of the Victorian era. ("Women Who" 35)

From the article it is clear that the "slur of celebacy" is a Victorian concern but has taken new forms in the latter half of the 1920's; the article's pity for the unmarried woman is a slur in itself, with its unquestioning description of her as "empty and unfulfilled." The emphasis in other articles on marriage as a woman's route to success firmly underlines

that position and there is no sense that the woman who is unable to marry should be offered other alternatives, or other ways to fulfill herself: she cannot be a mother, so she can only have "but one preoccupation" and that is the life she has not lived. She is unable or unwilling, for a variety of reasons, to be a mother, but she remains absorbed with the question of motherhood.

One way in which the private work of mothering can be taken into the public sphere is through the extension of women's maternal responsibilities to include providing for their families. During the war, articles expressed concerns about the women who would lose husbands in the war and would then have to support themselves and, in some cases, their children. Women's paid labour could, in those circumstances, be reconstructed as part of a mother's responsibility to her children. One of the most explicit examples of this is Bell's sketch of a Vancouver insurance broker, "Home Expert Turns Into Business Woman to Support Seven Kiddies" (58). The woman took over her husband's business after his death, and drew on her experience of domestic economy and organization to do so: she is quoted as saying that "learning to run a business … could not be worse than learning to run a home" (Bell 15 Aug. 1924: 58). Her exemplary performance as a business woman is attributed to her children and her responsibility towards them: "she says the faith placed in her by her little ones would have caused her to make good at anything" (Bell 15 Aug. 1924: 58). By providing for her children, this insurance broker is moving the private and literal work of mothering out of the domestic sphere and into the public workplace.

The private work of mothering is used figuratively as well as literally to justify women's public work and to construct images of women in professional life that retain a

sense of those women as feminine. In a sketch of Alice M. Jamieson, a judge in the Calgary Juvenile Court, Dorothy Bowman Baker uses Jamieson's personal history as a mother to refute concerns about the desexing potential of such public work:

> To the minds of many ... will flash the mental picture of a hard faced woman of masculine appearance, for they will reason, 'How could a woman judge be otherwise?' But one of Mrs. Alice M. Jamieson's greatest charms is her distinct femininity. Small of stature, her expressive features framed in soft, gray hair, a decided mother-type of woman, Mrs. Jamieson is no less the capable, convincing judge. (66)

This image of Jamieson stands in contrast to the more sexualized images of Carey and Macbeth, and Baker uses Jamieson's maternal role to place her as a "type" of woman. The emphasis on her physical appearance also reflects the kind of image used to describe younger, single women, but it is modified to take account of her age: her "small stature" and "soft, gray hair" emphasize her femininity and remove any sense of her as threatening or unfeminine. Barker goes on to describe, even more explicitly, the ways in which Jamieson's experience of motherhood proves her an exemplary woman as well as an exemplary professional:

> Outside of her business life, Mrs. Jamieson is a most domesticated "home-body." She is the proud mother of two daughters and two sons, and the happy grandmother of four lovely grandchildren. Mrs. Jamieson has only one left at home now but is often heard to say, "I love boys and wish I had a dozen sons." (66)

Jamieson's exemplary mothering, exemplified in her desire for "a dozen sons," is linked by Baker to her work as a judge and to her success in helping women and children move away from criminal activity. The private work of mothering is moved out into the public sphere, blurring the boundaries between the two spheres and demanding women's exemplary performance in both. This also helps in the justification of women's public

work: the invocation of domestic precedents to support professional activity was central to the debate around women's entry into business and the professions.

This use of domestic precedents, and in particular mothering, to justify women's business and professional work was not new, even in the 1920's, and the invocation of a history of women's unpaid philanthropic work was frequently used in these biographical sketches both to justify and limit women's professional interests. In her 1918 article in *Maclean's* quoted earlier, Edith G. Bayne describes Genevieve Lipsett-Skinner as "mistress of three strenuous professions -- pedagogy, journalism and law -- and at the same time a most indefatigable social service and patriotic worker," and as "President of the Consumers' Protective Association, Vice-president of the Civic League, Vice-president of the Portia Club and an able executive in the Canadian Women's Press Club" (113). She is, at the same time, firmly positioned in relation to a narrative of public mothering: "When you meet Mrs. Lipsett-Skinner on the street she is usually upon a mission of mercy for the cause of poor children and sick children lies very close to her heart" (Bayne 113). Her professional work is put in the context of her maternal instinct and her concern for not only her own children but also the children of others who might be less fortunate; her mothering is made public and combined with her professional work. A similar image is constructed in N. de Bertrand Lugrin's sketch of the British Columbia politician Mary Ellen Smith in which Lugrin's first impression locates Smith firmly within a maternal role:

> Just as I entered the roomy office which is Mrs. Smith's sanctum, I met a woman going out. She had an infant in her arms, and she had been weeping. There were tears in Mrs. Smith's kind eyes as she greeted me.
>
> "The poor thing," she said, "hers is one of the tragic cases which simply defy remedy. The father of her baby is a Chinaman, and has left her without any support. Something must be done to help her, my dear, and yet what --" (60)

Smith's concern is part of a construction of women's public work that uses maternal responsibilities to define the range of women's professional concerns. Later in the article, Smith is cited as admitting that "the problems of her own sex are those which interest her most" (Lugrin 62), and this reinforces a model of women's paid employment that relies on the invocation of domestic precedents. The concern with issues that involve women and children directly and that can find precedents in women's voluntary philanthropic and domestic work is used to justify women's paid professional work and to suggest that such work is not in competition with male concerns within the same professional sphere.

This concern for the welfare of others does not, however, always translate into concern for the advancement of other women in white-collar occupations. Although these sketches are exemplary in that they offer models for other women to emulate, they sometimes counter that with explicit injunctions against women attempting to combine the domestic and the professional in the way that the women in question have been able to do. Women such as Stowe-Gullen are cited as pioneers and as working actively to support and promote women's professional aspirations, but others are cited as discouraging women from professional careers and encouraging them to devote themselves to the domestic sphere. A 1925 *Maclean's* article by Myrtle Hayes Wright profiles Esther Thompson, a social services community worker and director of Women's Extension Service for Manitoba. Wright emphasizes Thompson's own commitment to women's and children's health in her professional work, illustrating how she can combine domestic and professional concerns in an exemplary way. However, Thompson

is quoted as valuing women's domestic and family labour over their professional work and reinforcing motherhood as the most appropriate sphere of activity for women:

> "Our university education has taught women to see the size of men's work and the bitterness of their own; to despise and rather look down on work in the home; to consider the home a sphere too narrow for a woman's fullest development; to value a 'career' more than home, husband and children. Why? Because our university education has placed wifehood and motherhood on too low an economic, social and moral plane."
>
> She predicted then [in her last year of university], and she still holds, that the newer education will be a training for home-making and such education will establish woman in her true sphere, the home. This, Miss Thompson maintains, is the ideal education, and is primarily what every woman needs. (Wright 72)

Despite having received a university education herself, and one that was *not* a "training for home-making," Thompson advocates domestic education for women as "the ideal education, and ... primarily what every woman needs." While her point that university education encourages people (and women in particular) to undervalue women's domestic labour is an important one, her containment of women in their "true sphere, the home" is so complete that it stands in stark contrast to her own successful professional career.

In the 1925 sketch of the composer Gena Branscombe cited earlier, Branscombe is held up as a woman who has combined her musical career and her family in an exemplary and remarkable way. However, like Thompson, Branscombe does not encourage other women to do the same. Instead, she encourages them to postpone their own musical careers until their children are grown up, and she attributes her own success at balancing family and career to a "sympathetic husband" (Hodgins 79). Her own success is held up, explicitly, as "an example of that balanced 'double life' led by many gifted men and women, particularly women who, somehow, manage to neglect neither home nor art" (Hodgins 78), but that example is undercut by Branscombe's own advice. The article, also quoted above, on the Vancouver insurance broker who works to support

her seven children similarly reinforces the primacy of motherhood and the work that is done within the home in a similar way:

> The home woman's work is not valued as highly as it should be. She gives freely of her time, her strength and her ability; so much so that it is taken for granted, and its worth is not fully appreciated. If home work were done on a salary basis, the mother would be the highest paid official in the world. (Bell 15 Aug. 1924: 58)

While all three women are successful outside the home, they advocate motherhood and domestic life more strongly than they encourage other women to engage in careers in the public workplace. Penina Migdal Glazer and Miriam Slater identify the lack of female professional mentors as one characteristic of the early years of women's professional involvement (Glazer & Slater 134-135). Using the example of research medicine, they argue that those who followed early women pioneers in the field often had to do so without active female mentorship because "the most successful women … often did not understand their crucial role in this effort" (Glazer & Slater 135). They identify this lack of effort in ensuring continuity in women's professional work as stemming either from a lack of understanding of the need for mentorship, from the fact that women often had "neither the time nor the support to ensure other women's continuing success" (Glazer & Slater 136), or from the fact that women "could easily become a highly visible target for elimination, especially if their behavior were judged in the least imprudent" (Glazer & Slater 144), and that included being "feminist" in helping and supporting other women's efforts. This seemingly contradictory perspective is not uncommon: professional women, in the interviews and articles in *Maclean's* and *Saturday Night*, often reinforce the supremacy of domesticity and maternity at the same time as those women's lives are demonstrating the breadth of other professional or more public possibilities.

Both *Saturday Night* and *Maclean's* include biographical sketches of Minna Keene, a Canadian photographer, in 1919 and 1926 respectively, and the author of the sketch for *Maclean's* covers the same topic for *The Business Woman* in 1927. While the three articles do contain many of the elements already discussed, a comparison of the three can help bring into relief some of the ways in which the questions and assumptions around Keene's public and private lives were framed for different readerships. The *Saturday Night* sketch appears in an article titled "Photography as a Profession for Women" which is part of "A Short Series of Articles on Subject of Professions Which Women May Adopt" by Leslie Horner. Alan Maurice Irwin's two articles on Keene present very different perspectives on her life and work, reflected in their titles: "How a Woman Found Fame With a Camera" (1926) and "Minna Keene, F.R.P.S." (1927). The tension between the presentation of a woman as an exemplary *professional* and as an exemplary *woman* is central to the choices Irwin makes in the very different contexts of *Maclean's* and *The Business Woman.*

The exemplary function of these short biographical sketches is made explicit in the way Horner, in her article on photography as a profession for women, represents Minna Keene's professional success. The article is illustrated with reproductions of work by Keene, who is cited as a "conspicuous" Canadian photographer (Horner 25). Keene's work is held up as being of the highest quality and as something which aspiring photographers should strive to emulate:

> While such an artistic grade of work might tend to discourage the would-be professional, it should really only serve to stimulate to increased endeavor. The knowledge that one woman can obtain such fine results should be an added incentive to others to "go and do likewise." (Horner 25)

Horner makes the function of profiling successful women and presenting them as exemplars explicit when she articulates exactly what the reproduction of Keene's work is supposed to achieve: the women readers of *Saturday Night* are being encouraged to "go and do likewise" (25). But Horner also addresses directly the potential problem of presenting someone as successful and renowned as Keene as an example for other women to emulate. Keene's position as a world-class photographer could, Horner acknowledges, have the opposite effect on women who might be considering taking up photography as a profession. This negative effect is reinforced, to some degree, by her detailed description of the training and apprenticeship required and the concomitant need for an independent income to support that study and professional development. She ends, however, with the promise of an appropriate return on the time and money invested in the training:

> Once you have served your apprenticeship, however, then, oh reader, you have a profession right at your hand – a profession that would amply compensate you for all the vicissitudes involved in study, experiment and failures – chiefly failures. (Horner 25)

While Horner's picture of the training and apprenticeship period is far from being unequivocally positive, she does leave her readers with an idea of a career that will be fulfilling and exciting and that can provide a real outlet for an individual's creativity and artistic talents.

Alan Maurice Irwin's first biographical sketch of Keene, published in *Maclean's* in 1926, transforms Keene into not only an exemplary professional photographer but a domestic ideal as well. While the article's *title* focuses on Keene's professional success, the *subtitle* subsumes that success in a narrative of maternity and family life:

> How a Woman Found Fame With a Camera: Minna Keene, home-loving wife and mother, of Oakville, Ontario, is the only Canadian woman Fellow of the Royal Photographic Society. Hers is an honor so rare that it has been conferred on only six women. This is her story, the story of a woman who turned to art to keep up with her family and succeeded beyond her wildest dreams. (Irwin 1926: 72)

Keene is introduced as a "home-loving wife and mother" before she is identified as "the only Canadian woman Fellow of the Royal Photographic Society," placing the emphasis on the domestic over the professional. Keene's success is firmly identified as something exceptional, but the idea that she has succeeded "beyond her wildest dreams" protects her from accusations of immodesty or unfeminine ambition. The fact that she took up her profession to "keep up with her family" represents the co-option of her professional success back into a narrative of domestic life, positioning Keene's profession in relation to her family.

Irwin stresses Keene's maternal role and her commitment to her family even more explicitly in the body of the article:

> Home-lover! The term is probably the one that Mrs. Minna Keene would like best. For, although her claim to fame rests on her skill as a photographer, the affection of her family and the admiration of her friends are tributes to the Minna Keene who is essentially a successful wife and mother. (Irwin 1926: 72).

Keene is characterized as valuing her family over her professional work, and Irwin's exclamatory declaration that she is a "home-lover!" reinforces that role and draws the reader's attention to it. Keene is, despite her professional success, "*essentially* a successful wife and mother" – a characterization that gestures rhetorically towards essentialist notions of women's natural and appropriate roles. Even Keene's choice of photographic subjects is placed in relation to this natural domesticity when Irwin writes that "homely subjects seem to be favorites of the artist -- probably because a love of

home is instinctive with her, despite a professional success with the camera" (1926: 73). Professional success is explicitly constructed as a potential threat to domestic life: Keene succeeds inside the domestic sphere *in spite of* also succeeding outside it. In contrast to other married women in these biographical sketches, Keene succeeds as an exemplary woman in other ways too. She is described as being very beautiful, with "a complexion that must make envious the hearts of many younger women" (Irwin 1926: 73), even though she is no longer a "girl" by virtue of her husband and children as well as her age. Irwin chooses to end his article by reformulating the assertion with which he began:

> Artistically, she is a success. Commercially? There is too much of the artist in this woman, who is first of all a successful wife and mother, to worry about commercial recognition. (1926: 74)

Keene is, above everything else, a wife and mother: she is an exemplary domestic figure. Professionally, she manages to retain her femininity by valuing art over profit. Drawing on a familiar ideological position that relegates professional women to amateur status by denying their ambition and requiring that they work for the love of it, Irwin constructs Keene as a domestic figure and amateur artist who becomes a professional almost incidentally. Given the conservative slant, at the time, of much of *Maclean's* content on the question of white-collar paid employment for women, the emphasis on domesticity and maternity is not surprising. It further reinforces, through the example of Keene, the domestic sphere as the most appropriate arena of activity for women.

Irwin reworked his article on Keene for publication in *The Business Woman* the following year and, predictably, the focus is very different. Writing in a publication that explicitly focuses on women's working lives, Irwin moves away from the domestic

picture that he paints in *Maclean's* and describes Keene as "artist first, then business woman" (1927: 13). This is in marked contrast to the "home-loving wife and mother" of his earlier article (Irwin 1926: 72). In this later article, Irwin emphasizes Keene's "world fame," her independence, her world travel, her many languages, and her professional standing. He sets up the recognition of her success as something noteworthy and something to be admired: "Fellowship in the Royal Photographic Society of England is much to be coveted, and to Mrs. Keene belongs the distinction of being half the women Fellows" (Irwin 1927: 13)[3]. Irwin places her professional and business life in the foreground and highlights her many accomplishments as remarkable and well deserved as well as exemplary.

In the 1927 article, Irwin mentions the members of Keene's family in the context of their own professional careers, rather than as the central focus of Keene's life. While they were left anonymous in the *Maclean's* article, in *The Business Woman* they are named individually, and described in terms of the artistic work they each do:

> Minna Keene says that she took up photography in "self-defence." Her husband, Caleb Keene, long ago made a name for himself with his exquisite lacquers and pastorals. Her son is no mean artist in oils, and Violet Keene, her daughter, is both painter of water-colors and photographer. (Irwin 1927: 13)

In Irwin's earlier construction of Keene as an ideal mother with an ideal family it was not necessary to treat the family members as individuals, given that they were being used rhetorically to construct an ideal or model. By naming them and describing what each one does, Irwin places Keene within a more detailed context that combines the artistic and professional with the domestic. The only other reference to Keene's domestic life

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[3] This statement does appear to contradict Irwin's statement in *Maclean's* that Keene was one of six women Fellows in the Royal Photographic Society (1926:72), although he may well be referring to earlier women.

comes in the final paragraph: Irwin describes Keene as "fortunate in being enabled to combine home-making with business, [and] shin[ing] both as hostess and professional woman" (1927: 13). But even this reference to Keene's domestic life emphasizes a more public aspect of domesticity – being a "hostess" – over the more private work of mothering. There is almost no comparison between this construction of Keene in purely professional terms and the effusive and insistent celebration of Keene's maternity and domesticity in Irwin's first article. The different editorial styles and readerships of the two publications go a long way towards explaining the different emphases of Irwin's two sketches. The wives and daughters of the middle-class readers of *Maclean's* and the business and professional women of *The Business Woman* constitute two very different readerships. The sketches of Keene in the two magazines highlight different sides of the debate around women's professional work and femininity, and about the negotiation of the private and the public, the domestic and the professional.

The biographical sketches that were so popular during the 1920's in *Maclean's* and *Saturday Night* served a number of sometimes contradictory purposes. Their insistence on the domestic reinforced the primacy of home and family for women in the years after the war, even though the war had meant women's paid labour outside the home was increasingly normalized for the middle class. The acknowledgement of women's business and professional achievements meant that gains made during the war were not lost or forgotten. These exemplary biographies both challenged and reinforced conventional notions of femininity and, through an increasing emphasis on women excelling in both unpaid domestic work and paid professional or business work, began to construct the model of the "superwoman," as *Chatelaine* was to call her, or the "two-job

woman" which was the term coined in *The Business Woman*. The idea that one could combine conventionally feminine attributes with stereotypically masculine public work meant that women were increasingly under pressure to excel at both, rather than having to choose one over the other. In some ways, this can be read as liberatory for women and something to be applauded: they would no longer have to face the "almost always enforced choice" (Newell 98) between work and home. In other ways, however, this demand for doubled excellence placed new and competing pressures on women, pressures that are often painfully difficult to negotiate and reconcile.

Chapter Five

"The two-job woman"

Articles published in both *Maclean's* and *Saturday Night* during the 1920's push towards a redefinition of both women's professional and domestic roles and responsibilities. In 1928 the Maclean Company founded a magazine exclusively for women titled *The Chatelaine*, later to become simply *Chatelaine*. In founding *Chatelaine*, the Maclean Company attempted to compartmentalize women's concerns and sought to capitalize on what was seen as a potentially lucrative market of women readers. In its early issues, *Chatelaine* focused almost exclusively on women's domestic lives and gave very little space to discussions of women's business and professional careers. In contrast, *The Business Woman*, first published in 1926, was given over almost entirely to questions about women's working lives. *The Business Woman* developed out of *Club Life*, the monthly newsletter of the Canadian Business and Professional Women's Club in Toronto, and was originally edited by a board from that organization. The editorship was soon given to Mary Etta MacPherson, and later to Byrne Hope Saunders. The CBPWC provided an advisory editorial board for the first year, until the appointment of Saunders as editor. The two magazines offer perspectives on the negotiation of the domestic and the professional, but each one privileges one aspect of that negotiation: *Chatelaine* offers a chance to examine the ways in which the primacy of the domestic was reinforced as the only acceptable and natural option for women; *The Business Woman* offers an interesting

counterbalance to the pressures on women to return to the domestic sphere after their wartime experiences in the public workplace.

The concerns of these two magazines intersect on at least one point: the question of married women in the public workplace. In the latter half of the 1920's it was still common for women to be expected, or forced, to resign on marriage, and it was not until "after World War II [that] marriage no longer disqualified a professional woman from paid work" (Kinnear 18). This choice between married life and paid employment is reminiscent of the "almost always enforced choice" that Mary O'Conner Newell described in her 1908 article (98). While this choice was central to the discussions about women's white-collar work during the early twentieth century, it is often glossed over in historical accounts of the period. For example, John Herd Thompson describes the typical pattern for women in the labour force:

> the largest group of working women were single and under thirty and expected one day to marry and attend to the duties of a home. Married women entered the labour market not to seek careers but because they were forced by economic necessity after being widowed or deserted. (Thompson 12)

While the census figures for the period do support Thompson's assessment of the relative youth of women working in business and some professions, the motives and influences he cites do not engage with the complexity of the debates around women's work at the time, or with the complex and varied reasons that induced married middle-class women to enter the public workplace. There were certainly still intense ideological prohibitions against women working and, more pointedly, against married women working or continuing to work. As Mary Kinnear points out, women's financial independence was a disturbing idea, even through into the latter half of the 1920's, and "the self-sufficiency of a

Fig. 7. *The Business Woman*, cover, 1 Nov. 1926.

respectable woman who could decently support herself with her own trained and tested labour was itself an affront to the notion of gendered dependence" (Kinnear 16). However, the debate over this question suggests that there were a number of married women who either chose to enter paid employment or were obliged to do so. Both *Chatelaine* and *The Business Woman* take up this debate, but in different ways and to different extents.

Judging by the contents and focus of *Chatelaine* in its early years, the Canadian woman's "every interest and need" (Anne Wilson 16) was centered on her home and family life. At the same time *Maclean's* "Women and their Work" department became less celebratory of women's public achievements and more concerned with their private ones. The Maclean Company's introduction of *Chatelaine* is symptomatic of the attempts to enforce the more rigid distinctions between male and female spheres of interest, and between the professional and the domestic, that characterized the exemplary biographical sketches focused on in Chapter Four. The women's department in *Maclean's* was, following on from the magazine's earlier incarnation as *The Busy Man's Magazine*, aimed at the wives and daughters of the "busy men" who were the preferred subscribers. The publication of *Chatelaine* represents a fragmentation of the market that potentially doubled the sales for the J. B. Maclean Company. *Chatelaine* was not aimed at the female counterparts of *Maclean's* readers, at business and professional women, but at *Maclean's* readers' families. Perhaps because *Maclean's* was a business magazine meant that its women's section could concern itself, almost by default, with how business and professional life affected women. Compartmentalizing female readers inside a

publication designed specifically for women meant that this business influence was removed, and the content consequently could become more concerned with the domestic sphere. Setting up the textual equivalent of the separation of the spheres that so concerned the early articles in Maclean's *Busy Man's Magazine*, *Chatelaine* and *Maclean's* contained female and, implicitly, male readerships within spheres of appropriate interest and focus. Why should *Maclean's* concern itself with "women's issues" when *Chatelaine* could do that in its place? *Chatelaine*, as a magazine aimed exclusively at women, could more easily delimit the areas of interest and activity that were deemed appropriate for women.

Chatelaine's content strongly reinforced a domestic role for women: it included "token articles on social problems . . . and the changing structure of family relations . . . trends in decorating and fashion . . . successful-woman profile[s] and fiction," as well as "departments on crafts, food, budgeting, cosmetics, gardening and dressmaking" (Sutherland 159-160). Away from the masculine influence of *Maclean's* with its focus on politics, economics, and world affairs, a female readership could be fed an almost completely domestic and personal diet of articles. *Chatelaine* asserted the supremacy of the domestic, the maternal, of getting married, having children, decorating a home, and becoming and remaining attractive. While there was a strong emphasis on the strength and resourcefulness of Canadian women, this was not explicitly politicized and was more often historicized: a series on pioneer women from various provinces is one example. There were, in the first two volumes, some articles that dealt with the combination of career and family, or with women's political involvement, but *Chatelaine* did not continue

the tradition, begun in *Maclean's*, of exemplary biographical sketches and articles giving education and career advice. The "Brides Club" [sic] of *Maclean's* in the late 1920's was replaced with the "Bride's Progress" series in *Chatelaine*. The "Brides Club," although fictionalized, had focused on a group of young women helping and educating each other, learning through the successes and mistakes of the "club," of the community. The "Bride's Progress" series offered instruction to the new bride, "Peggy," and the emphasis is on Peggy's instruction by external sources rather than on her learning through her own and her peers' experiences. Through the first two volumes of *Chatelaine*, the only department to appear in every issue is "The Promise of Beauty," although others did appear sporadically. A one-page department called "What the Woman Citizen Should Know," written by Anne Anderson Perry, appeared in only three issues[1], and was quickly replaced by *Chatelaine*'s new "Problem Page." The largest department was, for several issues, "Mothercraft," although a new, consolidated department called "The Modern Chatelaine: A Department for the Housekeeper" became the main regular department, beginning in the May 1929 issue. While there was some acknowledgment that women worked outside the home, the home was still the focus of most of the articles published in the early years of *Chatelaine*.

Even with this focus on the domestic sphere, two articles in early issues of *Chatelaine* do explicitly address the possibility of middle-class women's white-collar employment and the ways in which that necessitates a negotiation between the demands of the home and the public workplace. The first article is titled "Every Woman Should

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[1] "What the Woman Citizen Should Know" appears in the September, October, and November, 1928, issues of *Chatelaine*.

Lead a Double Life" (Fea 21). The article's aim is set out in the subtitle: "a thoughtful argument in favor of every woman having as distinctly dual a life as the average man" (Fea 1). While the author, Margaret Fea, advocates that women take up hobbies to provide themselves with this "dual life," she does address the possibility of women taking paid employment outside the home. Fea argues that women who devote themselves entirely to the domestic, and specifically married women, are at risk if they do not have something outside of the home with which to fill their leisure time. While not criticizing the domestic work done by women in the home, Fea does point out that such women need ways to relax and that the "misuse of leisure time" (4) can become the cause of serious individual and social problems. Fea suggests that women taking up hobbies or various forms of gentle exercise will help maintain both individual morality and social order. Women's domestic responsibilities are extended to include care of the self, and the improvement of both mind and body through the careful and considered use of time away from the work of running a home.

Fea also asserts that there is no reason why married women should not seek paid employment outside the home. She does, of course, qualify this argument and restrict the possibility to women who have already raised their children and who are left alone in the home once those children have started school. To make her point, Fea quotes an unnamed woman whom she describes as "known throughout all Canada":

> "I have no patience with the cry against allowing married women to work. When their children are out of their arms and in school, why should the married women not turn their years of experience into capital to help their husbands provide the best of everything, from food to education, for the children they have brought into the world?"

> There was more of the same argument. It was sane, too, pointing out that a woman should not be bound by the narrow circle of her wedding ring to stay at home and mark time while younger, less competent women, often with independent means, earned the money the married women could put to nationally important uses, while the other spent it in ways far less worth while. (4)

Fea frames her argument in terms that draw on a number of familiar assumptions about the nature of women's work and about women's role within the family. The anonymous woman she quotes frames married women's paid employment in terms of family responsibility. Women can leave the home so that their families might profit, both economically and figuratively, from their experience and maturity. What that experience might be is not made clear, although there is the implication that it is motherhood. Paid employment is then figured as supporting both the husband in his responsibility to the family, and as fulfilling a maternal responsibility for the children's welfare. As in earlier articles in *Maclean's* and *Saturday Night*, the emphasis is on building exemplary families, with exemplary mothers at their centres: married women may work, but they will work to "provide the *best* of everything" for their families. A woman's role and responsibility within her family, within the domestic sphere, provides the justification for her leaving the home to enter the paid labour force.

Fea herself elaborates on how married women might further justify working outside the home. A married woman would be working for the betterment not only of her family but also of the nation; her salary goes towards the "nationally important" task of raising a well-fed and well-educated family. Her participation in the paid labour force can then be constructed neatly as combining maternal and patriotic duties and averting the threat of both individual and social moral decay. Fea does this by setting up married

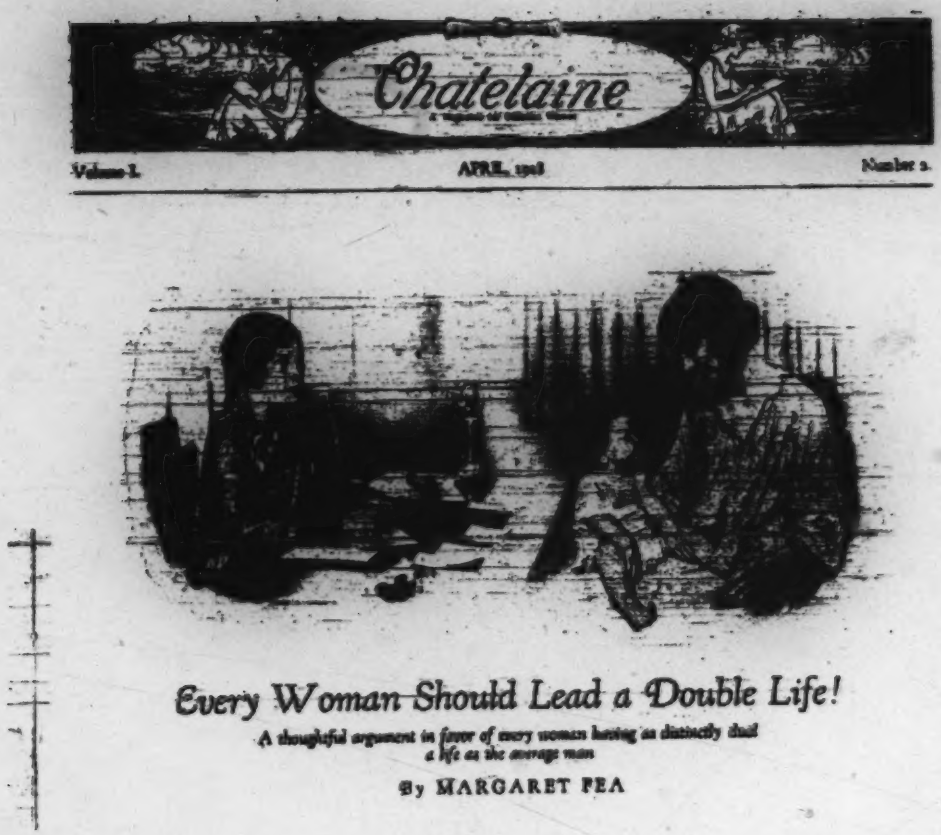
Chatelaine
Volume I. APRIL, 1928 Number 2.
Every Woman Should Lead a Double Life!
A thoughtful argument in favor of every woman having as distinctly dual a life as the average man
By MARGARET FEA

Fig. 8. "Every Woman Should Lead A Double Life," illustration and header from Margaret Fea, " Every Woman Should Lead A Double Life," *Chatelaine* Apr. 1928: 1.

women against single women in the public workplace, and using conventional assumptions about single women's reasons for entering paid employment to further justify married women working outside the home. As we have already seen, arguments against equal pay, treatment, and promotion for women so often rested on the assumption that women who worked in white-collar jobs did so only temporarily and out of a desire to fill in time between school and marriage. Questions of single women's financial need,

whether their own needs as individuals or as members of families who relied on their contributions, were rarely considered. Fea's characterization of single women as "less competent" and as spending their salaries in ways "far less worth while" draws on a stereotype of working single women as both frivolous and financially independent. She sets this against the figure of the married woman entering the public workplace as a way of providing the best for her family and becoming, by doing so, an exemplary mother and woman. By reframing married women's paid employment in terms of maternal responsibility, Fea reinforces the primacy of the domestic and contains women's employment in the public workplace within a narrative of mothering and commitment to home and family.

Three months after "Every Woman Should Lead a Double Life," another article in *Chatelaine* takes up the questions of married women and mothers in the public workplace. Virginia Coyne Knight's article "Only a Super-Woman Can Juggle Both a Family and a Career!" focuses on the problems of trying to negotiate professional and domestic commitments, and takes up Fea's earlier argument directly:

> The woman who has not some outside interest in her life is in greater peril than any ever faced by that erstwhile heroine of the serial films, Poor Pauline. To be messily removed from material existence by a roaring lion, a falling tower, or a runaway express-- what are those decidedly unpleasant deaths compared with that living death of becoming a bore to one's family and to oneself? (Knight 21)

Knight treats Fea's assertion that women need to continue to grow and pursue interests and activities outside the family with some irony. While Fea argues seriously for the maintenance of balance in women's lives and in their families through the combination of domestic work and carefully-used leisure time, Knight is a little more facetious about the

responsibilities Fea describes; what is more, she emphasizes the difficulties of combining an exemplary domestic life with other outside interests. Knight argues that this combination is difficult enough with a hobby, but that the difficulties are multiplied with a woman's career:

> how much harder it is for the ambitious woman who swore she would keep up her profession after she married! For while a hobby may return when the children are older and be received with all the more zest for its absence, it is not so easy to recapture a profession. (Knight 21)

Like Fea, Knight sees a married woman's professional or business work as something that must be interrupted for the raising of children and may be resumed only after they are grown. Her point that it is rarely easy to re-enter the public workplace after an extended absence is important, though, and is still raised today.

In "Only a Super-Woman Can Juggle Both a Family and a Career!" Knight depicts women's failure in the negotiation of domestic and professional. Unlike the more positive exemplary sketches in *Maclean's* and *Saturday Night*, Knight's article focuses on the difficulties and the ultimate impossibility of "Juggl[ing]" the home and a career. Her examples are more negative and serve more as warnings than as role models. She does, however, point to the hypocrisy of those who comment on women's attempts to combine married life and paid employment:

> Yet we sometimes look askance when some young woman whose work once showed promise sinks quietly beneath the waves of matrimony. "Spineless," we think secretly, and we feel perhaps a little bit superior that we are single and splendidly carving out our lives. Little do we guess the struggle that has gone on under our eyes before she went down for the last time. She has not advertised it. When she found her strength unequal to two jobs, she gave up the least important and died from the professional world with no one to blow Last Post over her but her family and a few close friends. And for the rest of her life she will probably hear this or that complacent male with half her brains chortle out the list of men's

> achievements with the time-worn comment, "What have you women done that can equal this?"
>
> Nothing very spectacular! What we have done has been only to populate the world, and we have done it so quietly that no one thinks very much about it. It is usually attributed to Nature and let go at that. And some of us have become famous, and we are complimented by being told that we have "masculine mentalities." (Knight 21)

Again, the domestic life and the work of motherhood are valued over the professional, even as Knight laments the loss of a woman's professional potential in marriage. A woman's public work is the "least important" of the "two jobs" she might try to do, and is given up for the work of raising a family. The choice is figured in terms of a responsibility this time not to nation but to race: women are charged with "populat[ing] the world." Knight critiques those who both ascribe a natural role to women and then dismiss it, who attribute the work of, and credit for, maternity to nature rather than to the women who undertake it, and the scorn of "this or that complacent male." While marriage and motherhood are held up as the only appropriate and natural roles for women, they are also scorned and undervalued in relation to worldly success. The other choice for women is to enjoy professional success, to "become famous," and consequently to be characterized as masculine or as desexed by their professional achievements. The extent of the conflict is made clear, as is the hypocrisy of those who fail to realize it.

As a more developed example, Knight offers the cautionary tale of "Martha Brown." Martha attempts to combine a writing career with marriage and family life, and eventually fails through nervous exhaustion and a near-complete physical and mental breakdown. The postponement of a career or of the resumption of a career until after the

children are grown up is made more complicated here, and Martha's vocation as a writer forces her into an irreconcilable conflict between her work and her family:

> It is easy to say, "Wait until your children are older." But suppose you are teeming with characters that *must* crawl into stories. Suppose unspoken words roar continually in your ears like mountains of water pounding on a beach? Suppose it never leaves you night or day, this craving to create beauty and truth? And – you – can't! (Knight 56)

Martha's attempt to negotiate this conflict, even with the assistance of a "Mother's Help" (Knight 56), pushes her to a mental and physical collapse which leaves her temporarily incapacitated and unable to perform either role. The article ends with a description of Martha's new life, and the new way she has found to combine work and family life. It is not an attractive picture. Martha is described as literally piecing together an hour a day for her writing by snatching a few minutes here and there as she sees to her other responsibilities (Knight 61). The compromise is emphatically more on the professional side than on the domestic.

While Knight's article does, from its title on, seem to assert the impossibility of women combining home and career, it also stresses that women should have the opportunity to try and that they should be respected for their efforts and supported in doing so. Knight's article suggests that while the balance might not be easy to achieve, the attempt should be supported and acknowledged. It should not simply be dismissed as impossible or postponed until the children have grown up. However, the alternative Knight offers is not an attractive one. Knight acknowledges the difficult and demanding work of running a home and raising a family: "It takes something more than courage to be interested in outside affairs when one is jaded and perplexed by the recurrent and

multitudinous matters of a home" (21). The example she offers is, unlike those in *Maclean's* or *Saturday Night*, negative, a warning of the consequences of straining oneself in the attempt to be a "Super-Woman." The ideal of combining marriage and paid employment is constructed as impossible; and while Knight appears to applaud the attempt and critique those who do not support it, she does not offer any solutions to the very real problems of this attempt to combine professional and domestic, public and private, spheres.

The use of the word "Super-Woman" in Knight's exclamatory title underlines the assertion that is it is impossible to combine marriage and paid employment. In *The Business Woman*, however, that combination is treated in a far more pragmatic way and consequently seems much more within the reach of ordinary women. Even with its primary focus on women in the public workplace, *The Business Woman* did deal with questions of domestic life but framed those questions in terms of women's business or professional lives. Articles on fashion were presented in terms of dressing well for the office[2], and the cookery department featured ideas for quick and easy meals[3]. The magazine also included regular (although generally short-lived) departments on finance and on other business concerns. *The Business Woman* also encouraged its readers to respond to articles it published, not only on its letters page but also in article length pieces that engaged directly and in detail with the original article's views and ideas. While women's working lives were the central concern, women's domestic lives continued to

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[2] For example, see Charity Mitchell Johnson's "Wonderful Woman – Ridiculous Raiment" (Nov. 1926: 11), Lucretia's "Beauty for the Busy" (Nov. 1926: 20), or Marianne's "What Are the New Clothes Saying?" (Sep. 1928: 14).

receive a good deal of attention, suggesting that the negotiation of the two was important and of immediate interest to both editors and readers.

In *The Business Woman*, a woman who attempts to combine family and professional life is neither an impossible "Super-Woman" nor a "Martha Brown" doomed to failure and collapse. She is referred to as a "two-job woman" – a more prosaic but perhaps more accurate title. The phrase is first used in a January 1928 article by Justine Mansfield titled "Can the 'Two-Job Woman' Succeed at Home and in Business?" (8). Mansfield goes on, in the subtitle, to expand on that question: "When the Modern Married Woman Closes the Door on her Home from 9 to 5, Can She Hope to Have as Successful a Life as Her Victorian Sister Who Devoted all Her Energies to the Home?" (8). This is underlined visually by the two line drawings that accompany the article. On the left of the double page spread is a woman in nineteenth-century dress, carrying a small broom and looking very miserable. On the right is a confident-looking woman in modern dress, a short skirt and a cloche hat, who appears to be walking out through the front door. Mansfield sets up the two-job woman historically, constructing a narrative of progress and modernity that places a married woman working outside the home as a product of both changes in attitudes and developments in technology. To support her contention that women can and do work two jobs and succeed at both, she draws on conversations, possibly fictionalized but presented as real, with couples in which the wife works outside as well as inside the home.

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[3] For example, see "Some 'Emergency' Meals That Can be Made Quickly and Easily" (Sep. 1928: 37) Also, the cookery department often appeared under the heading "The Business Woman Entertains."

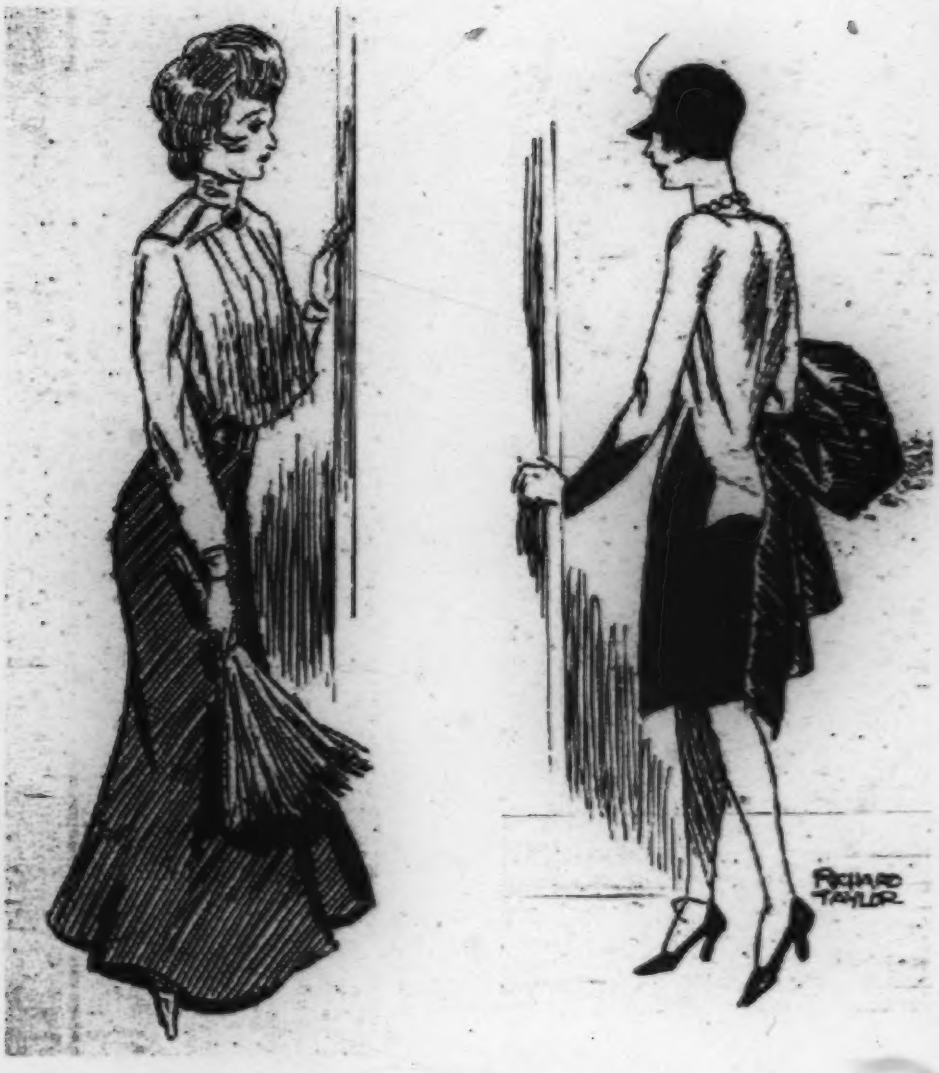

Fig. 9. Modern and Victorian, illustrations from Justine Mansfield, "Can The 'Two-Job Woman' Succeed at Home and in Business?" *The Business Woman* Jan. 1928: 8.

Mansfield starts her examples with an outburst from "Bill" that he is "sick of the new mode of living, and wish[es] he had been born a hundred years ago when feminism and two-job women did not exist" (8). She undercuts Bill's comment with humour and with the exclamation that it was provoked by the discovery that a "tiny button … had become separated from his shirt!" (Mansfield 8). While Bill is protesting his wife's neglect of the domestic, Mansfield is pointing out how trivial his concerns really are: after all, it is only a button and a tiny one, at that. Her second example comes from "Mr. and Mrs. A." who are described as "careerists" (Mansfield 8). Again, Mansfield only records the husband's views on the subject but Mr. A. seems happier with his two-job wife than Bill appears to be:

> Mr. A., when I asked him how he felt about something suffering as a result of women conducting their homes and careers, said he was grateful that he never married anyone but the "modern" type of woman, who neither finds marriage, nor home, nor babies sufficient. He believed these things are not sufficient for a man: why should they be sufficient for a woman? (8)

Mr. A.'s assertion of the importance of women developing and enjoying their full potential echoes arguments put forward by Fea in *Chatelaine* and others in *Maclean's* and *Saturday Night* about the importance of women not stagnating in the domestic sphere. Here it is figured in terms not of maternal responsibility but of personal fulfillment and development. The emphasis is more on the woman as an individual than on her as a mother or wife. Mansfield's third example is "the case of Mr. and Mrs. B." (9) and presents, this time, the wife's perspective:

> "Just because I married a man economically able to take care of me, that doesn't mean I have to stop being *myself*! Why, it would be too funny for words! Do you know," she went on, "I am one of the first agency directors in the country; I have a reputation of my own; I am well known in my own field -- if you took my job

> away, even with the marvellous compensation of John and our home life -- I think I would be frightfully restless and unhappy. All John's money couldn't make up to me for that." (9)

Mansfield's emphasis is on the wife's amusement that she should even be expected to abandon her career in favour of her marriage. Mrs. B. is not continuing to work out of financial need but because she has already established a successful and fulfilling career and is not prepared to give that up. Her comment that she would be "frightfully restless and unhappy" if she were to leave the public workplace and remain only in the domestic stresses the importance of fulfilling work and opportunities for women. Mansfield argues that a husband would be "thriving and more satisfied at having a wife who is also an intelligent companion" (30), echoing an argument commonly used in defence of women's paid employment. While similar articles in other magazines focus on the domestic side of the negotiation between the professional and the domestic and the ways women's domestic experience can be taken out into the public workplace, Mansfield focuses on the ways in which women's professional lives can feed and enrich their domestic lives.

Mansfield does, however, also address the question of women's domestic work. She does not deal extensively with motherhood, as many similar articles do, but focuses instead on the work of maintaining a house. Drawing on her own experience, Mansfield claims that many women who continue working after marriage do so because they "[prefer] to … do some nice clean work that wasn't as ungrateful a task as housework" (9). Domestic work is neither idealized nor trivialized as it frequently is in other contexts, but is treated as something necessary but unpleasant and undervalued: "the job of a housewife never paid yet and it probably never will" (9). In an explicit attempt to

pre-empt criticism of two-job women, Mansfield states clearly that they do not "neglect their homes" but rather that they put domestic work into perspective:

> They are willing to do housework – even without gratitude, but … they refuse to make housework a fetish. They refuse to permit it to "overrun" them. Instead they infinitely prefer to give it its proper place; to do it well, and intelligently, and not let it take up all their time. (9)

The assumption that women are entirely responsible for the care and maintenance of the home remains intact. (There is, after all, no suggestion that domestic work might be shared with a two-job *man*.) Still, Mansfield moves away from the kind of rhetoric and ideological position that assigns domestic work as women's sole area of interest and activity, and she sets up a model of a modern, efficient housekeeper who does the work and does it well but who is not completely consumed by it. This is, in part, historical and a result of changing technologies. Mansfield points to the development of domestic appliances and of contraception as reasons why the modern woman need not devote as much time to the home as women in the nineteenth century had been obliged to do:

> Nowadays, with small homes, with milk delivered at the doorstep every morning, with bread available at a moment's notice at the corner bakeshop, with the plentitude of laundries, and with steam-heated apartments, to say nothing of "birth control" and few babies to take care of (of which indeed much might be said), there is not sufficient outlet for the energies of modern women. She doesn't differ vastly from her Victorian sister; she needs must have her faculties and brains used; therefore, she has two jobs. (30)

The evolution of the modern home and the widespread availability of time-saving products and services have created the situation that makes the two-job woman possible and, in some ways, necessary. The domestic sphere can no longer, Mansfield argues, satisfy women who wish to use their intelligence and abilities to the full. An article the following year takes up the same argument, and discusses the ways in which it easier for a

"modern" woman to manage both jobs than it was for women who had to run homes without the benefits of "so many sanitary conveniences and labor-saving devices that help us keep clean" (Wilkes 10). With the modern home being so different from homes of the past, women must seek fulfillment elsewhere: the modern two-job woman is presented as a product of the evolution of technology as much as of society.

Mansfield's article is not the first in *The Business Woman* to deal with the question of married women in paid employment. A March 1927 article titled "Should Married Women Work?" addresses the question directly and constructs it as an old question needing new answers given the changing circumstances: "The Question that has Bothered the Female of the Species Since the Days When Eve Went Apple-Picking Comes With a New Insistence to the Modern Woman in Business" ("Should" 9). The article consists of two shorter pieces, written by two Toronto women, in which each offers a perspective on the title's question. A short editorial comment gives the context for the two pieces that follow: "*('The Business Woman,' feverish with interest over this vital matter, solicited the opinions of several prominent Toronto women, who in turn willingly and graciously considered the questions. Two of these pronouncements appear below. -- Editor)*" ("Should" 9). The two pieces are placed next to each other on the page, with photographs of the two women. Dr. Margaret Patterson's response is printed first, and her answer unequivocally supports the idea of married women working outside the home. She qualifies that support in a very familiar way with the assertion that a mother's responsibilities to her children in their early years must take precedence over the demands of a woman's career: "Marriage and home-making is the highest career, and

should not be sacrificed to a lesser" ("Should" 9). Patterson goes on, however, to refute the popular assumption that married women will neglect their husbands if encouraged to pursue careers of their own. Instead, foreshadowing Mansfield's point, she argues that a husband will be happier with a wife who is happy and fulfilled than with a wife who is constrained and bored: "So far as I can see, the husband reaps the greatest benefits in the married woman arrangement. He has the advantage of a more orderly home and a better informed wife" ("Should" 9). Patterson strongly asserts that there is no reason why marriage should end a woman's professional career, and she ends by again refuting accusations that married women in paid employment necessarily neglect home and family. Similar to Fea in *Chatelaine*, Patterson argues that it is preferable to have a married woman employed in something that benefits both her and her family than to have her misuse her leisure time:

> Every woman should fit herself for some office which she can fill with profit to herself and usefulness to others. Idleness is not only a great temptation but the source of much unhappiness and a consuming love of selfish pleasure. At the Pan-American Conference, Lord Astor was asked: "Is it disastrous to have the wife and mother devoted to politics?" He replied emphatically, "Not half so much as to have her devoted to bridge." ("Should" 9)

The invocation of bridge as a symbol of women's idleness strongly suggests *The Business Woman* is aimed at a middle-class readership, as does even the assumption that women would have leisure time they could misuse. That women can benefit themselves and their families by their business and professional careers is a familiar justification for married women's paid employment. The idea that the modern woman will have time to be idle if she is restricted to the domestic sphere seems to have been taken up along with that

notion of family responsibility and used extensively in the debate[4]. Women's paid employment then takes on a moral dimension and provides women with a way to avoid temptation and moral degradation.

The companion piece to Patterson's article appears to advocate the opposite view: "Harriet M. Ball (Mrs. Colin Sabiston)" is described as having "Some Piquant Remarks" on the subject ("Should" 9). Rather than opposing Patterson's argument, however, Ball changes the terms of the question:

> Should a married woman work? Certainly not! No one should -- matron, benedict, bachelor, spinster, or what have you. But, unfortunately, most of us must. The trick is to make the work seem as much like pleasure as possible. ("Should" 9)

While the format of the article implies two opposing views pitted against each, the content presents instead two very different arguments in favour of married women combining domestic lives with paid employment: Patterson focuses on the benefits to husbands of working wives; Ball offers advice on how to persuade a skeptical husband that working outside the home is acceptable while still maintaining at least an illusion of gendered dependence. Ball argues that "it's a rare man who does not at least pretend that he wants his woman 'clingy'" ("Should" 28), and goes on to describe a situation in which both husband and wife work outside the home and the husband still maintains the illusion that he is supporting his wife:

> So, even though he knows better, give him the impression that a sense of sheer helplessness and futility has driven you out of the home; that, as a matter of fact, you are as much a washout at work as at home; but that in the course of time (with

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[4] Nellie McClung, writing in *Maclean's* in 1928, defends herself against accusations of neglecting her family in similar terms: "I wish to say that I have spent more hours in my own home than the average woman, for I do not play bridge, I am not a habitual attender of teas, and I rarely go out in the evenings" (71).

> luck) your intellect will have been so broadened with experience, that you may commune with him, if not upon equality, then at least as an intelligent (though humble) student at the feet of the philosopher.
>
> In the meantime, of course, salt away your "jack" in a separate bank account. The laws of Ontario decree what you earn thus, is your own, absolutely and forever.
>
> One final word: Whether you work out of the home, or in it, or both, keep the Nominal Head well and promptly fed. Domestic animals of all kinds will forgive much if meals are regular and palatable. ("Should" 28)

Ball's argument presents a subversive, if manipulative, alternative that enables married women to work outside the home, even without the full, conscious support of their husbands. Women are encouraged to manipulate their husbands while seeming to remain the more subservient partners. Ball does, however, make an important point about the preservation of women's financial independence and asserts a woman's right, supported by law, to keep her own earnings and to keep them separate from her husband's. She is, like Patterson, firmly in favour of a married woman's right to seek or continue a career in business or the professions. While the structure and format of the article give the illusion of offering pro and con opinions on the title's question, the content undermines that structural opposition. The article offers two very different versions of married women's working lives but it does not question, beyond the title, the right of married women to *have* working lives.

The content of *The Business Woman* was more often focused on the practical questions and concerns facing married women in the public workplace than on whether or not married women should work at all. Articles in other magazines often assume the reasons why women enter paid employment, and frequently characterize single women as working as a temporary fill-in before marriage and married women as working as an

extension of maternal responsibility. *The Business Woman* usually bypasses questions of motivation in favour of more practical questions concerning life in the public workplace. One notable exception is its publication of a survey, in 1929, titled "Why Do Married Women Work?" in which the magazine tried to "[present] the married woman's side of the question" (MacMahon 11). Mary MacMahon, who did the survey and wrote the article for *The Business Woman*, worked for the United Typewriter Company and was a member of the magazine's original editorial advisory board. The article discusses the responses of the three hundred married business women surveyed, although there is no indication made of the breadth of the survey or the selection process. It attempts to quantify, to some degree, the reasons why married women work and the conditions under which they do so, implicitly countering criticisms frequently leveled at married women in the public workplace. The first question asks whether each woman's husband is living because "the woman who must work to support herself after the death of her husband is outside the usual indignant protests against the married woman in business life" (MacMahon 11). MacMahon finds that only twelve percent of the women questioned were widowed, and seventy-nine percent of the women were living with their husbands. Fifty-four per cent of the women had husbands who were in permanent full time employment; twelve per cent had husbands who worked "periodical[ly]"; six per cent had husbands who worked part time; and eight per cent of the women who were questioned did not know if their husbands were working (which may perhaps be accounted for by the six percent of women who had been deserted and the three per cent who were separated). Fifty-seven percent of the women had children living with them, and four percent had

children at boarding school. This suggests that the common assumption that women who marry and have children automatically leave the paid labour force is not necessarily accurate, and it undermines the ideological prohibition on women continuing in paid employment after they marry. The numbers call into question the assumptions and generalizations that so frequently characterize discussions of women's business and professional work.

The survey also addresses the financial reasons why married women might choose to continue working or be obliged to do so. The idea that women are working only to supplement already secure financial positions is one of the assumptions on which so much of the debate around working women is based. MacMahon's survey finds only eight percent of the women questioned said they were working "to live more comfortably" (11). The respondents point to women's financial responsibilities: reasons given include "to support a mother," "to assist in the education of children," "for illness of husband," "on account of business failure of husband," and "to support invalid brother or sister" (MacMahon 11). The familial responsibilities of these married women in business are extended beyond a mother's responsibility to her children, and underline the often central role of the working woman in the economy of the extended family. These reasons support the argument that the "family wage" that so preoccupied employers and reformers, was "always ... more of an ideal than a reality" (Kinnear 16) and that women did not work, in general, for extra money, but to make essential financial contributions to their immediate and extended families.

Another frequently cited assumption about women's participation in paid employment is that it is always temporary. The survey, simply by virtue of its focus and the status of its respondents, moves beyond the question of whether women should give up work when they marry to ask "how long do [they] propose to work" *after* marriage. Thirty percent of the women responded "indefinitely" and seventeen percent "always," with other answers including "more contented working," "prefers work to bridge and social calls," "until husband earns more," and "as long as able." Most of the responses, although framed in different ways, suggest that the women are reluctant to give up work at all and do not, by any means, see their careers as temporary, to be given up when circumstances allow. The final assumption the survey addresses is the accusation that married women will neglect their homes and families in pursuit of their careers. Forty-one percent of the women questioned have no one "to take care of [their] home[s]" and fifty-two percent "do [their] own housework after office hours," with only four percent having husbands who help with that work. These figures reiterate the idea of the "two-job woman" and make it clear just how accurate that designation can be. It also belies the idea that all married working women immediately either neglect their homes or exploit the labour of other women as domestic help (MacMahon 11, 23).

The survey's subtitle refers to the questions as a "Time-Worn Subject," and the article begins by acknowledging that "we have all discussed the new feminine problem 'Should the Married Woman Work' at much length -- and successive generations of business women will probably continue to do battle on this subject" (11). Instead of reiterating the "time-worn" assumptions that characterize so much of the debate on the

question of married women's business and professional work, MacMahon's survey attempts to highlight those assumptions as often false and misleading. Rather than debate the ethics, moral or social, of married women in the public workplace, MacMahon seeks to test some of the assumptions that are used to oppose women's paid labour; what is more, she shifts the debate from one about married women's paid employment to one in which married women in business are active participants. Through the responses of those women surveyed, she demonstrates that married women have a variety of very legitimate reasons for entering or remaining in the public workplace and that their presence there cannot, therefore, be explained through stereotypes and assumptions based on gendered models of behaviour. By shifting the question from whether married women should work to why they are working already, MacMahon takes attention away from the moral dimension and focuses it instead on the practical and material questions raised -- and answered – by married women's paid employment.

These practical and material questions of married women's presence in the public workplace tend to dominate the content of *The Business Woman*. This, along with its very specific intended readership, sets it apart from the other magazines that form the focus of this study. The everyday questions and negotiations that faced married women in business or in the professions are addressed over and over again in *The Business Woman*, suggesting that they were very real concerns for Canadian white-collar women in the late 1920's. MacMahon's survey appears in the same issues as an article by Jessie McPherson titled, "What of the Wedding Ring in Business Life?" (8). McPherson's article focuses on the material consequences facing women who choose to continue

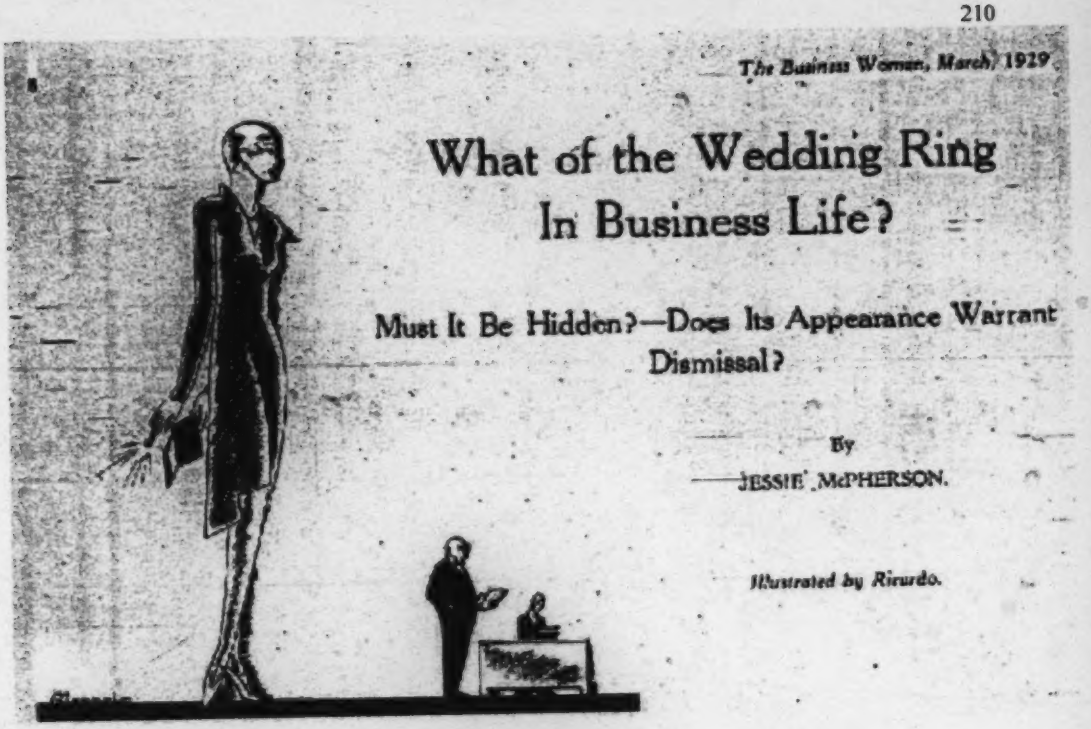
The Business Woman, March, 1929
What of the Wedding Ring In Business Life?
Must It Be Hidden?—Does Its Appearance Warrant Dismissal?
By
JESSIE McPHERSON.
Illustrated by Rivardo.

Fig. 10. "What of the Wedding Ring in Business Life?" illustration from Jessie McPherson, "What of the Wedding Ring in Business Life?" *The Business Woman* Mar. 1929:8

working after marriage in a workplace in which the decision is considered inappropriate, and she outlines some of the ways in which that choice might be taken out of their hands. The article's subtitle sets up the central questions addressed in the body of the article: "Must [a wedding ring] Be Hidden? -- Does Its Appearance Warrant Dismissal?" (Jessie McPherson 8). Taking a cautionary approach, McPherson warns readers that they need to understand the policy concerning married women in their own workplace:

> out in the great world of business, where it apparently has not yet been definitely settled that the laborer is worthy of her hire, to openly wear a wedding ring is taking a long chance unless you are thoroughly familiar with the ethics and prejudices of your firm. (32)

She points to the apparent contradiction that a woman may wear an engagement ring, "a flashing stone -- candid announcement that some man has taken out a pre-emption on her for life -- and yet dare not exhibit a plain gold band on pain of instant dismissal," and asks "Is yours one of the offices where the married girls have to hide their rings away?" (32). The implication is not only that this problem of discrimination against married women in the paid labour force is widespread but also that there are many married women working without their employers knowing they are married.

McPherson opens with an anecdote apparently related to her by a friend about the perils of wearing a wedding ring on a chain around one's neck to hide it from an employer:

> "One of the girls had taken off her chain in the wash-room -- her fur had made her neck a shade grimy and she washed it -- her neck I mean, not the fur -- and what did she do but forget the thing. The charlady came a little early that afternoon and she found it and of course had to come right out into the office with the chain and lay it on the boss' desk. Jane's wedding ring dangled from the end.
>
> "Poor Jane. She had her choice of claiming it or losing it."
>
> "Couldn't she have said it belonged to her mother or sister?"
>
> "Maybe. But she got flustered, you see. And when the boss asked her plump and plain if it was *her* ring she admitted it. The following day was pay-day and in Jane's envelope she found the bad news."
>
> "Fired?"
>
> "Well, they called it *letting her go*." (8)

In that office, the appearance of a wedding ring is seen to warrant dismissal. While the anecdote does provide a cautionary tale about the perils of concealing a wedding ring, it does suggest a suitable place to hide one's ring in order to escape detection if one is

careful. McPherson compares this anecdote to the conditions in her own workplace. While the latter is more accepting of married women as employees, it is certainly not an openly welcoming environment: "one or two [women] actually did wear wedding rings. They didn't exactly flaunt them, you understand, but they certainly made no attempt to conceal them" (32). As an example, she cites a woman in her workplace who supports a dependent husband and who wears her wedding ring. The woman in question describes her husband as "an invalid" whom the doctors "say … *has* a chance, but –," and adds that she wears her wedding ring principally to avoid the attentions of "a fellow in the cash department who['s] ... inclined to get fresh" (8). Even in an office in which women are not immediately dismissed when they marry, there are other considerations to bear in mind, and the threat of sexual harassment underlines the ways in which the mixed workplace was sexualized. The use as an example, too, of a married woman working to support a dependent husband counters criticism by making the woman a focus of concern and pity: her unfinished sentence implies the seriousness of her husband's unnamed condition. The threat of dismissal that is represented in McPherson's first anecdote is set against this later explanation of the multiple reasons why a woman might choose to wear her wedding ring. By articulating not only the unjust actions of some employers but also the complexity of individual situations, McPherson, like MacMahon, takes the question beyond broad generalizations and deals with the very real material effects of ideological prohibitions against married women's paid employment.

In "What of the Wedding Ring in Business Life?" the treatment of married women in the business world is taken beyond whether they might be fired for admitting their

marital status, and there is considerable discussion of the ways in which assumptions about women's lives before and after marriage might affect women's chances for promotion or even long-term job security. The assumption that a woman will automatically leave her job when she marries was at the centre of questions about the kinds of long-term work women could do and the kind of treatment they could expect from their employers. The common assumption about women's tendency to work for a limited time, only to leave and get married, is frequently cited in *Maclean's* and *Saturday Night* as a reason for dismissal and lack of promotion opportunities for women, and it is hardly surprising that this issue is taken up frequently in *The Business Woman*. As MacMahon's survey suggests, women did continue working after marriage, and sometimes after having children, and they did so for reasons not always connected to financial necessity. How does one argue that women should not be expected or obliged to leave their jobs once they get married, or that their being married should not affect women's chances for promotion or job security? In the May 1928 issue of *The Business Woman*, an article by J. Lambert Payne begins a discussion of these questions, and his points are taken up in a variety of articles from various standpoints in the following months. Payne's article is titled "Can Business Women Compete With Men on an Even Footing?" (8) and deals with the question of why women do not advance in their careers as men do. Payne is described as a business man, even though he has been working in the federal civil service for forty years, and as someone "Who Has Been an Eye-Witness of the Entrance and Achievements of Women in the Business World for the Last Half Century" and who "Draws Some Startling Conclusions from His Observations" (9). Even

before the article begins, his experience and the position from which he speaks are established by this editorial comment. Payne's opinions on the question of married women in the workplace are surprising, given the context in which they appear. He argues that women's inability or unwillingness to assume positions of responsibility is the central reason why they do not advance in their careers. While he bemoans the loss of able and qualified women from the federal civil service because of the fact that "no married woman who is living with her husband, and he a wage-earner, can be put on the pay-list," he does not argue for the lifting of that prohibition (38). Instead, he argues that women should not be allowed to advance precisely because when they leave, which they inevitably do, the loss will be all the heavier for the civil service. He puts the blame, albeit relatively gently, on the majority of women who, in his opinion, "regard employment as a stepping stone to matrimony" (38). Resorting to conventional arguments about women's natural roles and the centrality of motherhood, he argues that women's business and professional work will not significantly affect the structure of society:

> [women in paid employment] will neither interfere with nor seriously modify those great biological forces which have always controlled and will always control, human intercourse.... [T]he foundations of organized society will remain undisturbed. The home will still be the basic unit of the state. (38)

His argument rests on this assumption: women are so completely prey to the "great biological forces" impelling them towards motherhood and the home that they will not advance in the public sphere. Why encourage them to remain in paid employment with opportunities for promotion or with greater financial rewards? They are leaving anyway, so why make it easy for them to stay?

Other writers were ready to answer Payne's question. A few pages later in the same issue, an article by Alice E. Wilson explicitly engages with Payne's viewpoint, challenging his "balanced judgement" and the examples he cites (12). She draws on her personal experience as a woman in the civil service, taking the claim to direct knowledge of the question beyond the "Eye-Witness" status that is claimed for Payne:

> Your author has referred to the Civil Service and while like him I will touch upon the general subject, I should like to deal with that in particular. He has been in the service for forty years and I have been in it for just about half that time, but it is the last half, and, during the whole of my half, I have been a woman, which really gives me an advantage -- at least in the experiences relating to this question. (Alice Wilson 12)

Wilson cites not only her professional history and experience but also her gendered position to bolster her critique of Payne. She situates his argument as a "general" one and her experience as enabling her to make one that is more "particular," thus claiming the advantage of a more detailed knowledge.

Wilson argues that there are other reasons besides the biological imperatives cited by Payne for women's lack of professional success within the federal civil service. She describes women in the civil service and in business who are "doing responsible work, though not ranked as in responsible positions" (Alice Wilson 12), and she articulates a concern with the lack of recognition women often experience in professional contexts. While they might well be doing more responsible work, gendered assumptions about their abilities and the suitability of various kinds of work prevent them from receiving appropriate recognition or reward. While Payne points to the temporary nature of women's participation in paid employment as the reason why women do not advance to higher positions, Wilson cites a more concrete and institutionalized reason: she argues

that there is a lack of women in higher positions only because there is never a "position of $1,800 or up advertised that did not expressly state, 'male'" (12). She acknowledges that Payne correctly identifies the assumption that supports that kind of discriminatory practice and she refers to the "old stand-by explanation ... that when they are trained they 'turn around' and marry" (13). But Wilson dismisses on two grounds this concern and the assumption on which it is based. First, she argues that there are "in the service many women to whom it does not apply – 'old maids withering on the stalk,' as Wordsworth so nobly puts it" (13). Second, she suggests that "if it is the habit on offering a man a higher position to ask whether he is going to stay, why, do the same with a woman" (Alice Wilson 13). Wilson argues that "as an average, by the time a woman works up to a responsible position, she knows pretty well whether she is going to stay or not" (13). While acknowledging that marriage does often remove women from the paid labour force, Wilson breaks the connection between that and the reluctance of employers to promote women or even to treat them as permanent employees. She does not deny that some women leave but she insists on the fact that some women *stay*.

Two months later, an anonymous "Business Woman" takes up the debate. Wilson had asked several questions in her article's subtitle, and this Business Woman reframes them. The earlier article asks, "Are Woman Afraid of Responsibility? Will Men Work Under Women? Should a Woman's Bargain in Brains be the Same as a Man's? Should the Chance of Matrimony Retard Her Promotion?" (13), and the later article rearticulates those questions as "Do Women Want Responsibility? Should There Be Equal Pay For Equal Work? Will Men Work For Women Bosses? Should the Chance of Matrimony

Make No Difference to a Woman's Business Status?" (Business Woman 13). Reframing Wilson's questions allows the author to proclaim, as her title, that "The Answers Are in the Affirmative!" (13). Like Wilson, the author cites her own position and experience, in addition to her gender, as qualifications allowing her to express an opinion on the subject: she is a "typical business woman earning her bread in competition with men" (13). She denies being "one of those ultra-feminists" but describes herself as "only an average woman quite as anxious to do her duty as to seize her rights" (41).

She deals quickly and easily with the first three of the four questions. First, arguing that the fear of responsibility "depends on the individual woman," she makes the question more specific and denies any easy generalizations (13). Second, she points out that men are working for women bosses "right now all around us, and apparently not complaining in the least" (13). Third, she comments that she has "worked in offices where girls and women ... received only two-thirds the pay given to *young men doing exactly the same kind of work and not doing it as well*" (41; original emphasis). All these answers refer the reader back to the material realities of the situation for white-collar women in the public workplace. The author refuses the kind of broad generalizations based on gendered assumptions about paid employment, and focuses instead on specifics and on what is happening "right now all around us" (13).

The unnamed Business Woman gives more extended consideration to the final question of the four, the question of whether or not marriage, or the prospect of marriage, should negatively influence a woman's opportunities for promotion and the likelihood of job-security. To deny women promotion and job-security because they are likely to leave

paid employment after getting married is described as "the 'last stand' or rather 'last standby' if you like that better, of our opponents" (Business Woman 41). Addressing the question of the "almost always enforced choice" (Newell 99) between paid work and marriage, the Business Woman suggests that it is "perhaps ... the means of forcing a lot of women into marriage who looked with despair on the future as it appeared to them over the keys of their typewriters or above the pages of their ledgers" (41). This turns round the conventional argument that women's desire for marriage and children is to blame for the discriminatory treatment that they experience in the public workplace. The Business Woman argues, instead, that the treatment women receive is what drives them to look to domestic life as an escape from the business world. She does, however, also assert a married woman's right to work and outlines the benefits to the individual, the family, and society of her being allowed, or even encouraged, to do so:

> a clever woman does vastly better for herself, her home, her husband, her children and for the state and posterity, when she hires competent help for the routine labors of her house (as soon as her babies are babies no more) leaving her free for the more stimulating work for which she has trained herself and which is of value to the world at large. (Business Woman 46)

Like other earlier articles, this argument relies on the idea that women who work in the public sphere become better participants in the domestic sphere and in the business of marrying, maintaining a home, and raising children. Here, the work of the domestic sphere – aside from the care of the children – is reduced to "routine labors," thereby bypassing the kind of rhetoric that idealizes domestic labour as a woman's only appropriate activity or concern. There is also a clear class distinction: the "more stimulating work" of the married white-collar woman that will be of greater benefit to

society relies on the "competent help" of another, lower-class woman to support it. Just as the labour of professional men relied on the domestic support of wives and families, so the labour of white-collar women can only be successful, or even acceptable, with the domestic support of other women.

While arguing that married women should be given the right to remain in or return to the public workplace, this Business Woman does address the common arguments against it. She links those arguments to the question of equal pay which she touched on earlier in the article, and dismisses the reluctance of employers to sanction or support women's continuing employment or promotion as a "convenient alibi for those who hate to see a woman drawing a pay envelope commensurate with her worth" (Business Woman 41). What is often characterized as a concern for morality or social order is revealed here as discriminatory and based on resentment and dislike. The Business Woman points to the flaws in the business logic of only promoting men to higher positions, given that the "masculine candidate would probably insist on *more pay*" (41; original emphasis). The promotion of men only to positions of more responsibility was often defended as a sound business decision: men are less likely to leave so they are a more reliable long-term investment; women are likely to leave at any time so the investment of time and training will be lost. The Business Woman, like Wilson, argues that women often know, as certainly as anyone can, whether they will stay in a position or leave it in the near future. She points out that in business terms, it makes more sense to employ women because they are paid less for doing the same work – and, as she had argued earlier, often doing the same work better than their male counterparts. What is

constructed as a business decision owes more, in fact, to ideology and to deeply-held and discriminatory assumptions about women and their lives.

Fig. 11. "From the Employer's Point of View," illustration from Elizabeth Hope, " From the Employer's Point of View," *The Business Woman* Jul 1928: 9.

The debate continues in the following month's issue, but this time it is "From the Employer's Point of View" (Hope 9). The article's author, Elizabeth Hope, quotes "the choleric but kindly manager of a large office which employs hundreds of women in various business capacities" (24). His opinions on the issues raised in the Business Woman's article the previous month are reflected in the article's subtitle: "The Fact That

the Majority of Girls Enter Business Life With a Definite Expectation of Marriage Must Affect Their Promotion" (Hope 9). Here, the emphasis is put on the agency of the women involved: women have a "Definite Expectation" of marriage and they bring that with them into the public workplace. As discussed in Chapter Two, the workplace is considered sexualized through the presence of women and their ever-present search for a husband. Unlike the anonymous Business Woman and others, who shift the responsibility onto employers and their stereotypical assumptions about women and their lives, Hope's article's subtitle puts the responsibility on women for the lack of chances for promotion by focusing on this expectation of marriage and stressing that this is something women themselves bring with them into the workplace.

The employer Hope cites as representative is quoted as dismissing the Business Woman's article the previous month as "stuff and nonsense" (9). He goes on to argue that "until a girl is 30, and in these days until she's thirty-five and forty, she is a gamble for her employer" because of the likelihood that she will leave paid employment to get married (9). Men, on the other hard, can be relied on to "[work] all the harder and [be] keener than ever to make good" if they plan to marry because they would then be obliged to support a wife and family (9). Again, the assumption of the family wage and the responsibility of a man to completely support his wife and family economically is invoked to justify discriminatory employment practices and wage differentials. Hope does seek to undermine this stereotypical and discriminatory viewpoint at the same time that she makes it the focus of her article. After outlining the opinions of that first employer, she canvasses the opinions of other business men. Her search for an

"enlightened employer" is characterized as fruitless and she claims that she is unable to present the opinions of even one who could contradict the first. This is not presented, however, as endorsing the opinions of that first employer; rather, it is constructed as outlining the extent of the problem facing married women who wish to continue in or return to paid white-collar employment. Hope ends the article with a question: "How can we arrive at a satisfactory conclusion to the problem?" (24). She does not endorse the views expressed, but they are so wide-reaching and widely-held that she cannot offer easy solutions either. She can only reiterate that this kind of attitude poses a problem for women, raise the question of how to deal with that problem, and invite comments and suggestions from the magazine's readers.

Fig. 12. "In Conference," header from *The Business Woman.*

The readers of *The Business Woman* were apparently always quick to take up such an invitation[5]. The magazine's insistence on the importance of responses from its readers meant that debates, such as the one discussed above, were often conducted both in the

articles and on the magazine's correspondence page, "In Conference." Two months after Mansfield coined the term "two-job woman," letters on the correspondence page in *The Business Woman* began to take it up and discuss the questions it raises. In the March 1928 issue, "In Conference" appears under the subtitle "Many Discussions on the 'Two-Job' Woman" and includes five letters both for and against the combination of marriage and a career. The longest letter is signed by "Bernadine," who is a regular correspondent, and is titled, "Of Course She Can!" It is printed first on the page and is a direct response to Mansfield's article about married women and their careers. Bernadine returns to the argument that single women in paid employment are often combining careers and demanding family responsibilities without any protest from those who argue against married women's paid employment. However, "let these responsibilities take the form of a male with whom a matrimonial contract has been entered into and see what happens," even if that contract is "so vague ... that buttons are not even mentioned" (Bernadine 42). Through this point, Bernadine reiterates the centrality of working women to many family economies, and the contradiction inherent in not criticizing single women with family responsibilities in the same way as married working women are so frequently criticized. In a much shorter letter simply titled "Yes!" Ethel Townsend agrees with Bernadine and asks, "why on earth shouldn't a woman work after she is married?" (42). Both letters reinforce the idea that women who choose to continue to work after marriage should be supported and encouraged to do so, and underline the importance of the right of women,

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[5] It is unclear whether the responses from readers are genuine, or whether they were supplied by the magazine to promote debate or to give the illusion of an active and involved readership. I have chosen to treat them as if they are genuine, given that they are presented as such.

married and single, to make their own choices about their lives, both domestic and professional.

Three letters on the same correspondence page take the opposing view. While none of the three is as long as Bernadine's letter, they are all longer than Townsend's. The first, titled "Woman's Freedom" and signed by Femina, presents an interesting contradiction in its title and argument. The question of women's freedom might, in this context, be assumed to mean the freedom of women to make decisions about their own lives and to combine marriage and a career. However, Femina's argument is much more firmly conservative. Femina revises the Victorian adage that "Woman's place is in the home" (42): she argues "now that woman has emancipated herself," it should be changed to "'Back to the home' when she marries" (42). While not denying the right of single women to enter the public workplace, she does argue that the containment of married women in the domestic is still desirable. In terms that are sadly familiar, Femina blames working mothers for juvenile delinquency and the demoralization of men (42). Privileging the responsibilities of a wife over those of a woman to herself and her career, she asserts that women "have duties to home and husband far more important than anything they can achieve in the business world" (Femina 42). Femina's letter is a neat articulation of a conservative stand on the question of working women, and reinforces how deeply engrained the assumptions and ideas about women's lives and responsibilities were. The two other letters dealing with the "two-job woman" in this issue agree with Femina and express similar opposition, although from different standpoints. In a letter titled simply "No!", E.M.K. sets married and single women in competition with each

other for scarce positions, and argues that the decision by married women to remain in jobs after marriage selfishly impedes single women's chances of promotion and self-sufficiency (42). Married women working can then be figured as a betrayal of other women, rather than as a competition with men. Catherine B. Rutherford, in a letter titled "Emphatically No!", stresses the incompatibility of exemplary domestic and professional work. She states clearly that "a woman cannot have the title of being a 'Dutiful Wife' and 'A Successful Business Woman'" (Rutherford 42). It is apparently not possible to occupy both spheres successfully. Rutherford ends her letter with a question: " why should a woman get married at all if she does not want to assume the responsibilities of a wife?" (42). Being a wife is, it is implied, a full-time occupation and to combine that with another job casts doubt on the sincerity of the woman undertaking the "job" of being a wife. Drawing on established stereotypes and assumptions about women, their work, and their lives, the letters opposing the idea of the two-job woman do so in very recognizable ways.

The Business Woman takes up the idea of the married woman in the public workplace to a far greater extent and with far more pragmatism than *Chatelaine* or *Maclean's* and *Saturday Night*. *Chatelaine* more or less dismisses the possibility as something only to be undertaken by a "Super-Woman" and not, it is implied, by ordinary women. *Maclean's* and *Saturday Night* offer biographies of women who readers can aspire to emulate and, in doing so, they establish impossible standards of exemplary domestic and professional work for women. What *The Business Woman* offers is not a solution to the many problems of negotiating marriage and career but a discussion of the

ways in which women are attempting that negotiation and the kind of opposition they can expect to encounter. The two-job woman is not treated as a novelty or an oddity, and the moral and social dimensions of much of the discussion in other contexts is more or less ignored. *The Business Woman* is generally both pragmatic and optimistic about the future of married women in the white-collar workplace. The following statement appeared in *The Business Woman* only a month before *Saturday Night* announced that white-collar woman are "little more than ... object[s] of curiosity" ("Eve" 13):

> Yes, the working married woman is more than a passing fad. She has come to stay -- has come to make this a better world for her children, meanwhile, getting more out of life herself. And the business girl of to-day will find herself the business woman of to-morrow. Someone else who makes a business of it will keep her house. (Wilkes 21)

Business *women* -- an important distinction from the business *girls* of *Maclean's* and *Saturday Night* -- are treated in *The Business Woman* as a serious and permanent feature of the business world and the professions. The two-job woman is not constructed as an exemplary "Super-Woman" but simply as a woman who works in both domestic and professional contexts, with all the concerns, responsibilities, and rewards each of those brings.

Conclusion

"A Time-Worn Subject"

In March of this year *Maclean's* once again took up the question of women in the public workplace and the complex and ongoing negotiation of the professional and the domestic. The cover story of the March 1st, 1999, issue is titled "The Mother Load: Superwoman is Burned Out: Should Mom Stay Home?" and the cover depicts a powerful, if exaggerated, image of a working mother. A woman in a business suit balances a screaming baby on her hip while she juggles two briefcases, a diaper bag, and a handbag, and talks on her cell phone; at her feet lie a child's car seat, another diaper bag, and a toy. Not surprisingly, the expression on the woman's face is neither relaxed nor happy. She is, the picture tells us, a working mother but the combination is not presented, visually at least, in a positive light. The "Cover Story" consists of a full-length article as well as two or three shorter, one-page pieces. The title article, "The Mother Load," is by Patricia Chisholm, and it is accompanied by three other short pieces: "The Privilege of Home," in which Chisholm briefly reviews Danielle Crittenden's *What Our Mothers Didn't Tell Us*; "Of Budgets and Babies," a one-page article on mothers and fiscal reform by Robert Sheppard; and "A Feminist Stays Home," an autobiographical piece by ex-*Maclean's* Calgary bureau chief Mary Nemeth. These articles, and the debate of which they are a part, provoked considerable

reaction on the correspondence page of *Maclean's* in later issues, with the discussion continuing into the following month[1].

What is so noteworthy about these articles and the responses they provoked is the familiarity of so much of the rhetoric and ideas. Having spent time reading and researching the early twentieth-century debate around women and, later, particularly married women in the public workplace, I could not help but be struck by the ways in which Chisholm, Sheppard, Nemeth, and the individuals who responded in letters to the editor all resorted to such similar ideas, prescriptions, arguments, and assumptions that were so familiar. In 1929, Mary McMahon referred to the question of married women in the public workplace as a "Time-Worn Subject" (11). In 1999 the same subject is still being debated in remarkably similar ways even though the public workplace of 1999 is a very different place for women than that of 1909, 1919, or 1929. Legislation to deal with the more explicit instances of gendered discrimination and pay inequity, some provisions for affordable day care both in and outside the workplace, changing attitudes towards women in the workforce, social insurance provisions, as well as other gains fought for and won by the modern women's movement have meant that women's experiences of the paid labour force today are very different than those of seventy years ago. Women have become an indispensable element of the paid labour force; as Patricia Chisholm, quoting a Toronto employment consultant, points out, "we need women in the paid labour force in order to keep

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[1] Letters to the editor in *Maclean's* rarely appear for more than two weeks after the article to which they refer. Letters in response to "The Mother Load" and the questions it raises appear for five weeks after the article first appeared.

our economy going -- they provide 25 per cent of our tax revenue" (Chisholm "Mother" 50). Women are now an integral part of the public economy and their paid labour is indispensable to the fiscal health of the nation. Women's unpaid domestic labour has always, of course, been a vital part of any nation's economy but that contribution has gone, and continues to go, largely unrecorded.

There have been so many changes in the conditions of women's work in the public sphere, but in *Maclean's* familiar questions continue to be debated and recognizable arguments about women's roles and responsibilities are still being put forward. Luella Thompson, in a letter responding to Chisholm's article, expresses surprise that these issues should still be considered important and worthy of debate: " I had to pinch myself. Was I dreaming? Was this a 1950s copy of *Maclean's*?" (5); and Barb Gustafson, in her letter, includes the plea, "please, let *Maclean's* find something more newsworthy than recycled guilt about working moms" (4). In 1999 the subject of women in the workplace is still receiving similar attention, invoking remarkably familiar assumptions, and provoking responses that suggest attitudes have, for some, changed little. Even given the massive differences in the material conditions of working women's lives, many of the ideas and assumptions in which the contemporary debate continues to be grounded are familiar and have precedents in much earlier discussions, even if they have developed in response to changing conditions. In 1909, the question was whether or not women should remain in the domestic sphere; in 1929, the question was whether married women should be allowed to

remain in paid employment; in 1999, the question is only slightly reframed to be "should *mom* stay home?" (Chisholm "Mother" 46; emphasis added).

Chisholm's title article, "The Mother Load," presents the experiences of a number of mothers who have chosen either to work outside the home or to stay at home with their young children. The context in which she does this is the publication of Danielle Crittenden's book *What Our Mothers Didn't Tell Us* as well as the personal experiences of a number of Canadian business women and mothers. In her book, Crittenden outlines the reasons why women are dissatisfied despite ostensibly having more choices and more opportunities than ever before, and she argues that only a return to the home, to marriage, to stay-at-home child rearing, and to "traditional" values can salvage women's chances for happiness and fulfillment. She asserts that women's magazines and other media are now "relentlessly pessimistic" (13) about women's lives and that the optimism of the women's movement about opening up choices to women now seems naïve, especially in relation to the public workplace:

> By the late 1970s, the [women's] magazines had ceased to regard the workplace as an exciting, unexplored frontier. They now describe the office as just another source of frustration and boredom -- that is, when it's not a venue for sexual harassment, or the cause of the exhaustion and distress of working mothers. (15)

Crittenden advocates that women return to the home and to very traditional models of marriage and division of labour within the family, and her argument represents one extreme of conservative views about women and their domestic and professional lives.

As Chisholm and others point out, Crittenden's position takes full advantage of the privileges of class and economic freedom and fails to take into account that not all women have access to those privileges. Just as Mary O'Conner Newell's position as a married woman, a mother, and a professional journalist complicated the argument of her article on "The Failure of the Professional Woman," so the realities of Crittenden's life complicate her book and the opinions it puts forward:

> Crittenden, 35, appears to have lost very little by choosing to stay with her own children while they were preschoolers. Her career was well-established -- she has been a journalist since she was a teenager, beginning with a column in *The Toronto Sun*, a newspaper co-founded by her stepfather, Peter Worthington. She skipped university, and by the time she married fellow journalist David Frum in 1988, she had worked in Africa and China as a freelance writer. Currently, she is the editor of Washington-based *The Women's Quarterly*, she is due to begin a monthly column in *The National Post*, and she comments on women's issues for U. S. and Canadian radio and TV. Now that her two children, aged 5 and 7, are both in school, she describes herself, with a touch of irony in her voice, as a "thoroughly modern independent woman" who typically works from 9a.m. to 3p.m. (Chisholm "Privilege")

While the details of Crittenden's life are perhaps more readily available and more openly discussed than Newell's, there are still comparisons to be made. Both are writing about the impossibilities of women finding fulfillment in the public workplace and advocating the primacy of the domestic, of marriage and children; both are asserting, in effect, that women have failed to "make good" (Newell 99) on the early promise they showed in the public workplace. Yet both Newell and Crittenden are married women with children as well as professional journalists. A significant part of the critical response to Crittenden has focused on the

dichotomy between Crittenden's argument and her own practice: critics have read this, at best, as unrealistic and, at worst, as hypocritical.

While Crittenden is critiqued, albeit gently, by Chisholm for writing from a class position that gives her a security and stability that is denied to many other Canadians, many of the letter writers take up that question of class and economic power. Phyllis Frick, in the March 15th issue, points out that "women and mothers in [her] family have worked for generations, and continue to do so.... It is only the women of social and financial privilege who have not worked" (4). She argues that "Crittenden's experience is limited to life in upper-class Toronto and similar locales that bear no resemblance to the experience of the vast majority of Canadians" (4). Sarah Hansen, in a March 22nd letter, asks, "How about interviewing a couple that has absolutely no choice than for both to work?" and discusses the reality for many working Canadians of *needing* two incomes just to support a family's basic needs.

In 1999, the invocation of the separation of the spheres is no longer quite as easy or automatic as it was in 1909 or 1929. That said, however, there is still a common assumption that if one parent is to stay home, it should be the mother, reflecting the link that remains between women and the work of the domestic sphere. In the articles from the early years of the twentieth-century, there was no mention made of men having domestic responsibilities or being encouraged to share in running the home and raising children. In the 1999 *Maclean's* discussion, this presumption of women's exclusive responsibility is challenged. Chisholm's article in *Maclean's* does not address the possibility of fathers

interrupting careers to care for pre-school age children, but this omission is taken up on the correspondence page. A letter from Dan Azoulay in the March 15th issue provides just one example:

> I don't have a problem with parents working less to spend more time with their kids . . . What perturbs me is the automatic assumption (shared by both sexes) that the onus of doing this lies with the mother, as well as the fact that women who are unwilling or unable to do this are saddled with the bulk of the housework and guilt. (4)

Azoulay does not identify whether he is a stay-at-home father, but other letter writers do write explicitly out of that experience. What they all address is the question of institutional and personal support for their decisions to stay at home with their children. A letter from Tim Covell in the April 5th critiques government and society for not understanding and supporting men's choices in this respect:

> While women wonder whether they should stay home with their children, have a career or somehow manage both, men don't have the luxury of that choice. Society presumes that fathers will work, and put their careers first. Government policies, business practices and the media all reinforce that presumption . . . . Stay-at-home fathers get little support or respect. (4)

On the other hand, Thomas Sparling, in the March 22nd issue, stresses the importance of personal, rather than institutional, support. He also points to the double standard that still faces many women in their choices about families and careers:

> The fact that stay-at-home dads aren't even mentioned in your articles isn't just out of touch, it is unfair. Having said that, I see an inherent irony in my situation. While many stay-at-home moms I know receive such unfair criticisms as "You're wasting your life," I receive nothing but congratulations on my decision.

Sparling's identification of this gendered discrepancy as ironic highlights the double bind in which women can find themselves: criticized, on the one hand, for

deciding to pursue careers or, on the other, for deciding to stay at home. The portrayal of domestic and professional roles for men and women in popular culture reinforces that kind of stereotyping. A letter from Agatha Schwartz in the March 29th issue links those assumptions and contradictions to the media and questions of representation:

> As long as the media depict the traditional image of loving mothers while leaving fathers in the background, this model will be perceived as the only possible norm of parenting: mothers who carry the main burden and fathers who "help out." (7)

The power of representation to construct and constrain individual choices is central to Schwartz's point. When one image is held up as the norm and, by extension, commended as the only possible choice, the construction of other alternatives becomes more difficult. The Rev. Lyndon Hutchison-Hounsell expresses similar sentiments in the March 15th issue: "It saddens me that we still assume the responsibility of healthy families lies only on the shoulders of the mother." Other letters, however, make it clear that women are still expected to bear primary responsibility for domestic work and child rearing, and the omission of stay-at-home fathers from Chisholm's article helps reinforce that perception. As long as the media continues to represent that responsibility as falling principally, if not solely, on the mother, change will be even slower and more difficult than it already is.

The assumption that women work for reasons other than financial necessity remains central to the discussion about women in the workplace. Early twentieth-century debates around women's paid labour often rested on the claim

that women worked exclusively for extra money and to supplement already secure financial situations. The realities of women's obligations to their extended families and to themselves were effaced by the assumption that women's desire for material comfort or personal amusement was all that was motivating them to enter the public workplace. In 1999, this is transformed into a concern about selfishness and the desire for material wealth taking precedence over raising children. Letter writers often advocate that women -- or, in some cases, both parents -- cut back on the expectations they have about their material comfort and focus, instead, on better raising children. Letter writers often criticize parents, especially mothers, who work outside the home while placing their children in day care and link that to selfish desires for increased material comfort rather than to financial need. A letter by Jayne Patterson in the March 15th issue provides a striking example of this:

> The warehousing of our children in cubicles painted in primary colours is the ultimate act of selfishness. Parents must live up to their obligations in the thorough nurturing of our young. Economics is not an adequate excuse for dodging this responsibility. The solution is to rearrange our priorities and put our offspring ahead of material things.... Sadly for some, this will mean the day has come when parenthood is unaffordable. Who should suffer -- the adults who cannot afford financially to realize the dream of parenthood or the child who is shelved in day care while both parents work to allow him the luxury of being parented part time? (5)

While Patterson does use the gender-neutral "parent" instead of specifying "mother," other letters in the same issue and later support her general point and are more specific about the gender of the parent who is expected, still, to stay at home. This assumption that the choice to work outside the home is motivated purely by "selfishness" effectively demonizes parents who choose to continue

working while their children are still pre-school age. Patterson dismisses questions of economic need as inadequate to excuse the presence of mothers of young children in the public workplace while still locating the question as one of parental responsibility. The idea that parental responsibility might, for some, have to take the form of public work is not addressed. She acknowledges that requiring women to remain at home with their children might well render parenthood "unaffordable" for many and asks whether it is more desirable for adults to suffer through not being parents or for children to suffer by being "shelved in day care." This erasure of the lived realities of economic need as "not an adequate excuse" reinforces once again the classed nature of the whole debate. This is not a debate about working women but about working *middle-class* women. To have the chance to make the choice whether to work or to stay at home is to have the luxury of class privilege. For many working-class women and families who are on welfare or considered the working poor, this choice is simply not realistic. This erasure of women's financial responsibilities, even when linked to family and children, replicates the ways in which earlier debates effaced the sometimes extensive family responsibilities that led women into relatively well-paid white-collar work in the early years of the century.

The discussions both in the early twentieth-century and in 1999 characterize the debate as being centered around the question of women's choice. This emphasis on the individual's decision-making ability effaces the material conditions of women's lives that both enable and constrain the choices they are able to make. The question of individual choices remains important, however, in

an attempt to understand better the context in which those choices are made. As Mary Kinnear points out, "to acknowledge the broad common context in which individual choices may be taken is to recognize an ongoing dynamic of history" (154). Articles in *Maclean's*, *Saturday Night*, and *Chatelaine* between 1900 and 1930 represent women's choices as simple: either work in the home or work outside it. The choice may have been difficult but it was represented, in the early years, as "almost always enforced" (Newell 98). The incompatibility of the domestic and the professional, the private and the public, is constructed as an almost insurmountable obstacle and one which only a woman who is exemplary in every way, a "Super-Woman" (Knight 21), can hope to overcome. *The Business Woman* goes some way towards transforming that image of a working woman who can reconcile home and career with the figure of the "two-job woman" (Mansfield 8). The debate in *Maclean's* that once more addresses questions of women in the workplace early in 1999 also returns to the question of women's choices and their right to decide the conditions of their own lives. Concerns about how the idea of limitless choice appears to have become more important than the act of choice itself and assertions of the responsibilities and sacrifices that accompany all choices complicate the negotiation of home and career for late twentieth-century women. The women's movement of the 1960s and 70s is invoked both to support and critique the desire to "have it all" (McAdorey 5), and many of the letters assert that a woman's desire to have both a family and a career is selfish. In the March 29th issue's "The Road Ahead," Barbara McAdorey critiques the ways in which choice has been fetishized:

> When I read Sheila Copps's comment, 'I want to be a woman and a mother and a parliamentarian,' ('The mother load," Cover, March 1), I couldn't help asking myself, why not? Why should she or I or anybody else not have to make such choices? I'm not saying one can't have both a career and be a good parent. Some people can and do. That's wonderful. But not everyone can. I think the belief that we don't have to make choices stems from our society's false utopian notion that we can 'have it all,' that somehow we are entitled to everything we want. (5)

The question of choice becomes more complicated, just as it was in the early twentieth century, by the insistence on exemplary performance in all areas, personal and professional. The spectre of the superwoman that haunts discussions of women's working and personal lives from the 1920's on only serves to exacerbate the pressures on women and to complicate the already complex negotiations of personal and professional that are a part of so many women's lives.

Chisholm ends her main article in the March 1st, 1999, issue of *Maclean's* with what has come to be one of the central questions of the debate around women in the workplace and in the public sphere more generally. Quoting Sheelagh Whittaker, "one of Canada's highest-ranking female executives" (50), Chisholm shifts the focus of the debate from society to the individual:

> "I used to fight for the big issues, but I now I fight for the individual victories," she says. "Choose and then get comfortable with it -- don't be apologetic or twist yourself out of shape. One of the things that helped me a lot is that I never felt a moment's guilt about being a working mother." And, she might have added, don't expect others to make the same decisions. After all, isn't that what choice is all about? (50)

While it is impossible to ignore completely the expectations and prohibitions of society, Chisholm's argument is echoed in many of the letters published in the next month. As Donna Sacuta puts it, in a letter in the March 15th issue of

Maclean's, "all women are trying to find the right balance to meet their own and their families' economic, emotional, physical and social needs. We need to respect how difficult that job is rather than allowing it to become more divisive." Understanding the negotiation of the personal and the professional, of home and career, as a personal choice, while it does ascribe the agency for decision-making to the individual woman, can run the risk of effacing the powerful and complex ideological influences and prohibitions that constrain the kinds of decisions that any individual woman can feel able or comfortable to make. The context in which women have to make individual choices includes representations in the popular media and elsewhere which set out those roles and activities that are condoned and those that are not. The general both enables and constrains the specific, and the rhetoric of choice that dominates the present-day discussion of women's working lives perhaps misrepresents, or does not fully represent, the lived realities for women in the public workplace.

Understanding how questions about middle-class working women, about women in business and the professions, were discussed in the first three decades of this century can help us better answer similar questions being asked now. The exploration of the interconnected, mutually-sustaining and defining relationships between representation, lived experience, and ideology allows for a critique of the ways in which women's lives are depicted and, to some extent, constructed through popularized images and ideas. The striking similarities between the debates at the beginning and the end of the twentieth century, even with the dramatic differences that have taken place in women's participation in the paid

labour of the public workplace, can help us trace continuities in popular rhetoric about women's working lives. It is only through a more complete understanding of the history of that rhetoric and the assumptions informing it that we can hope to change the experience of women in the public workplace for the better and work for real choices rather than for the illusion of choice. The pressures on women in the workplace and the family remain complex, and the negotiation of home and career is still often a fraught one. Understanding the continuity of those assumptions and the ways in which those arguments have changed and developed historically can, I hope, enable us to make more informed choices about how we can answer those questions that still persist today.

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Appendix

Chronological List of Magazine Articles

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Lucretia. "Beauty for the Busy." 1 Nov. 1926: 20+.

Mary-Etta Macpherson. Editorial. 1 Jan. 1927: 1.

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